The Woman Who Lost Him

Josephine Clifford McCrackin

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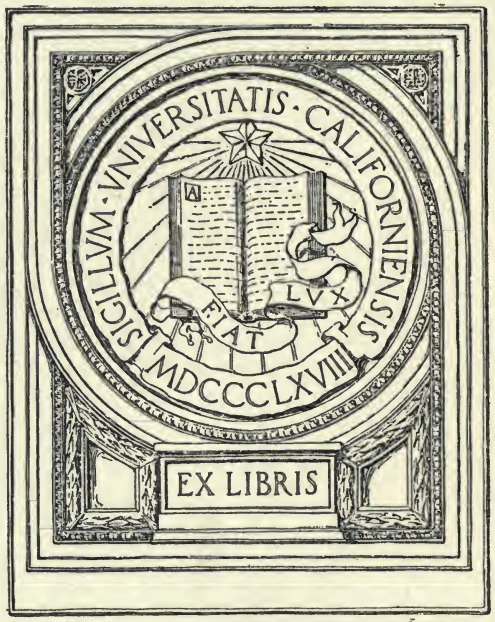
GIFT OF
Ambrose Bierce



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THE WOMAN WHO LOST HIM
and
TALES OF THE ARMY FRONTIER

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and

TALES OF THE ARMY FRONTIER

BY

JOSEPHINE CLIFFORD McCRACKIN

WITH INTRODUCTION

BY

AMBROSE BIERCE

1913

GEORGE WHARTON JAMES

Pasadena, Cal.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

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Mrs. Josephine Clifford McCrackin

Beloved Großmeister — This volume is laid at your feet with honest pride, and the undying devotion of Jo

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The Old Castle at Petershagen on the Weser, birthplace of Mrs. McCrackin

Monte Paraiso Cottage in the Santa Cruz Mountains, California, before the fire

Mrs. McCrackin's ambulance, with her escort, when, fleeing from her mad husband, she crossed the deserts of Arizona to New Mexico

The Sempervirens Club in the State Redwood Park, California

The standing figure in the center, looking to the riget, is the eminent Dutch botanist, Hugo de Vries, and at his feet on the right is Mrs. McCrackin

"Gedenkheim," Mrs. McCrackin's home in Santa Cruz, Calif.

INTRODUCTION

By Ambrose Bierce

To the few of us still living whose high privilege it is to have familiarly known the early work of the author of this book (the Josephine Clifford of Bret Harte's **Overland Monthly**) this later fruitage of her mind will address itself with a peculiarly tender salutation, as of a voice out of the twilight, saying: "Be of good cheer—the dark is not yet, and all is well."

It is a long interval, truly, but not a barren, for into it has been crowded much of living and of adventure—in other words, of thinking and doing, for thought is life and to do is to dare; the brave alone challenge attention of the gods.

Our author's life, of which this book is the evensong under the harvest moon, has been lived in the freaking gleams and brooding glooms that seem never to lie along the paths of the ungifted—children of the dread, wisely content in their encompassment of gray. A great writer has said that life is a farce to him who thinks, a tragedy to him who feels. But he who most deeply thinks most keenly feels; so his are the high lights and the black shadows; and however he move among them—with passive acceptance or dissenting activity—his life is more than a life: it is a career. Its every feature is "out of the common," and all its mutations are memorable.

The lady of whose life-story some hint seems to me, perhaps fancifully, to whisper in every passage of this book, has in foregoing volumes related less indirectly the

strange experiences which some may say have moulded her character, but which others may think, with a deeper philosophy, were shaped and determined by it. I am of those who attribute to character the larger share in bringing about events; and I think that this unique figure in life and letters could not, under any constraint of circumstances, have had a career greatly different from what has been. However this may be, let us be thankful that, in the slang of science, interaction of organism and environment did somehow, despite the friction known as suffering and sorrow, result in just that kind of woman living just that kind of life, for to the essential congruity between the two we owe just this kind of book.

I do not know that it is a great book. I do not know that it and its predecessors from the same pen have that incomprehensible distinction of character that more frequently merits than compels the transient attention that we are pleased to call fame. I know only that to me the books are the woman as I have known her, and that the woman is most interesting. In contemplation of that piquant personality, I disarm; "submissive to the deeper word" of its suasion, I throw down the critic's pen and yield myself to the charm of a delightful memory, "like an unresisting child."

Possibly I thereby abjure my many-times-confessed faith that personal character and literary work have hardly a speaking acquaintance with each other, and that "side-lights" of the one thrown upon the other are nothing but a darkening of counsel. So be it; I am not greatly concerned about consistency—not today—and God forbid that I retain always the power to see, in the cold light of literary perspicacity, the faults of my friend.

THE ROMANTIC HISTORY
OF
JOSEPHINE CLIFFORD McCRACKIN
BY
GEORGE WHARTON JAMES

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This story of Mrs. McCrackin's life is a reprint from *The National Magazine*, Boston, Mass., and appears here by the kind courtesy of Joe Mitchell Chapple, the Editor.

THE ROMANTIC HISTORY OF JOSEPHINE CLIFFORD McCRACKIN

By George Wharton James

I doubt whether any other woman in the United States today, save Josephine Clifford McCrackin, can write in the first person of her actual experiences of army life on the western frontier immediately after the close of the Civil War. In 1913 she celebrated her seventy-fourth birthday, and yet she is active and doing as much arduous work on a seaside town newspaper as the busiest sub-reporter on a metropolitan daily.

Her history in some cases is far more romantic and incredible than the wildest fiction. Indeed some of it was published a few years ago as fiction, and though it did not deviate in the slightest from the rigid truth, it was regarded as too improbable to be called good fiction. She has had an interesting life of association with Bret Harte, Charles Warren Stoddard, Ina D. Coolbrith, Joaquin Miller, Ambrose Bierce, Noah Brooks, Mark Twain and the other intellectual giants of the days of the old Overland Monthly, when Harte sat in the editorial chair and had these others as contributors. Then for a while she lived a happy pastoral life with her second husband on the glorious heights of the Santa Cruz mountains, to be suddenly rendered homeless by a forest fire that swept the whole mountain side and caused great devastation, loss and distress.

As a child she was a happy, prattling, high-spirited youngster, the petted child of a German of noble estate, Ernest Wompner, younger son of an old patrician family of Hanover. She came into this world November 25, 1838, and her birthplace was in the ancient castle, herewith reproduced, at Petershagen on the Weiser River, in Prussia. Her father fought at the battle of Waterloo, not under Blucher, who commanded the German troops of the allied forces, but directly under Wellington. This fact shows us what pawns we are on life's chessboard. In those days the king of England was also the king of Hanover, and therefore Hanoverian soldiers were English soldiers at the mere word of their king. Though but eighteen years of age, he was created a lieutenant on the field of Waterloo for conspicuous bravery, and when later he married Josephine's mother, he wore the scarlet uniform of the English army. The child was born, therefore, in an army atmosphere, and as a little one was often regaled with stories of army life, of thrilling conflicts, of personal adventures on the field of battle, and used to thrill with delight when a grizzled old warrior would come to the castle to visit her father, take her on his knee and tell her a story of some gallant charge, some forlorn hope, some brave and heroic deed which turned defeat into victory.

Josephine's mother was a daughter of the younger branch of the Hessian family of Von Ende (Ende von Wolfsprung). More correctly speaking, the title was Freiherr Von Wolfsprung, Count von Ende, for one of her far-off ancestors had been created baron by Emperor Karl the Fourth.

Her mother was educated with the view of becoming maid of honor to Princess Maria of Hesse-Kassel, and

her grandfather died while he was commandant of the old fortress of Ziegenhain, after having been, during King Jerome's reign, while Napoleon occupied Germany, commandant at Brunswick. It was during this time that the rightful prince—the Duke of Brunswick and Ols—endeavored to regain possession of the city, and the Count Von Ende, therefore, by the fortunes of war, was compelled to defend his charge against the prince to whom in his inner heart he rendered allegiance. Hence he was glad to re-enter the Hessian service when the French conqueror was overthrown.

Her nearest blood-relation—her cousin Reinier—was a cadet at the military school of Hesse-Kassel at the same time that the present Emperor of Germany, William II, was there, and he was as recently as the early 90's the commandant of the capital city of Berlin, his father having been the minister of war of Hesse.

I have been thus somewhat explicit in detail about Mrs. McCrackin's European relationship and ancestry, for they reveal the heredity that belongs to her and the influences that environed and controlled her younger days. She was of noble family and lived with nobles, was taught to look at everything from their aristocratic standpoint, and whatever culture comes with high birth and haughty breeding belongs naturally to her. All this is clearly revealed in her life today. She has no ignoble views of things, of people, of life. Her survey is from an elevated mental and spiritual plane, and though pressed upon by the weight of an arduous life, many cares, and her seventy-four years, she yet bears herself with the noble dignity of her ancestors, and unconsciously demands by that natural pride of bearing, the respect and deference of all with whom she comes in contact. Such is

the nobility of her soul that it is stamped upon her face and exhibited in her every movement, so that were she a charwoman or a washerwoman every gentleman would instinctively raise his hat to her in real honor and veneration.

Yet there is a strong strain of sterling democracy in her blood. At the close of the Napoleonic wars her father tired of the demoralizing life of the army and entered the Prussian civil service. He was made chief of the district surveying corps, and the castle of Petershagen, then in partial ruins, as the result of the constant battlings for its possession, was assigned to him as his residence and office. Here with his large staff of assistants he retransferred the whole country from the French system of measurement back to the German, and here in due time, Josephine, the subject of my sketch, was born.

But the spirit of discontent was rife among the upper classes of people, and it culminated in the year gold was discovered in California (1848) in the revolution. Josephine's father felt this unrest keenly, so much so, that two years before the open revolt he decided to remove to a new land with more democratic tendencies, greater opportunities and possibilities. Accordingly he came to the United States, settled in St. Louis, became a fully naturalized citizen, and thus Josephine came under the broadening influences of this democratic land when she was a child of eight years.

Here educated privately and then in a convent school, she received that groundwork of knowledge upon which she has so faithfully built in her later years. In 1854 her father died; an older brother, George, had left for California in the days of the gold excitement, and she, her mother and sister, were alone. In due time Lieutenant

James A. Clifford, of the Third Cavalry, United States Army, wooed and won her, and at the close of the Civil War, which found them at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, they were ordered to Fort Union, New Mexico, there to meet General Carleton, who was to meet the different troops sent there and assign them to the different forts, camps, and stations in his department.

From her own vivid writings one can gain a most interesting series of pictures of her journeys over the wild and desolate portions of New Mexico and Arizona to the appointed rendezvous. Reaching Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, the Third Cavalry joined General Sykes' command, and then started across the plains. She says in "Marching with a Command": "Besides the twelve hundred mules in the wagons, there were some two hundred head extra, and a number of horses for the officers. All of these animals had been drawn from the government corrals at Fort Leavenworth. . . . It was not till the second day, when we made camp, that I saw how large the command was; and I remember thinking that it had taken since yesterday for the 'tail end' of the trail of wagons, mules, and horses to leave the corrals and get into camp. . . . Fancy the tramp of eight hundred men, the keen, light-turning wheels of a dozen or two carriages, and the heavy, crunching weight of two hundred army wagons, drawn each by six stout mules! No wonder the grass never grew again where General Sykes' commands had passed!"

Before they went away from Fort Leavenworth, however, Lieutenant Clifford had purchased from the government stables a beautiful white horse, which he gave to his wife, intending it to be for her own personal use when she reached her new desert home. As this horse

figures largely in one of the most thrilling episodes ever a woman passed through, I shall quote Mrs. Clifford's description of how it came to her. "The door of our quarters stood open; the captain had gone out, and I was startled by a knock on the doorpost. Looking up, I saw the head of an orderly appearing at the door; but, poking over his head, I saw that of a horse evidently taking a strict inventory of everything in the room. Of course, I was at the door, and on the horse's neck, in a very few seconds, for, from the orderly I soon understood that the captain had sent the horse for me to look at. Colonel L——, with his two little girls, came up just then, and, as we were all going in the same command, the acquisition of a horse for the march had an interest for all parties. Together, we surrounded and admired the beautiful white animal; and the two little girls and myself were soon braiding clover blossoms into Toby's tail, and trimming his head and neck with garlands of buttercups —operations which did not in the least interfere with his good humor or his appetite for the juicy grass he was cropping. The captain, it seems, had already tried his speed and mettle; he was not appraised at any unreasonable figure, and so Toby was mine before we took up the line of march for the plains.

"From the wagon-master I heard later that Toby had been captured in Texas during the war. He had been raised and trained by a woman who had followed him around the country for some time, trying to get her pet back again; but Uncle Sam, for reasons of his own, had placed him in the stables of the Fitting-Out Depot. One thing certainly spoke for the truth of the story: whenever Toby had been let loose and refused to be tied up again, he would always allow me to come up to him,

when he would turn and throw up his heels at the approach of a man."

Captain Clifford rode him daily as the march progressed, turning him loose at halting times, for they soon discovered that he would not stray away. He was a cunning thief, however, was Toby, and Mrs. McCrackin tells several amusing stories of his thefts, as, for instance, on one occasion when he stole a lunch-basket deliberately from the lap of the Colonel's wife while she was preoccupied, deposited it on the grass, opened the lid and began to help himself to the contents. "Unfortunately for Toby, Mrs. L—— had spread mustard on her ham-sandwiches, and the sneezing and coughing of the erring horse first called her attention to her loss."

Another time after the major and his family had visited the Cliffords and enjoyed a tea-drinking, the latter were invited to repay the visit. The major's cook prepared a fairly elaborate spread and had just stepped out of the tent to call the family and guests to the meal, when Toby, who was loose as usual, "gravely walked up, swallowed the butter with one gulp, upset the sugar bowl, gobbled up the contents, and proceeded leisurely to investigate the inside of a tin jelly-can. The soldiers, who had watched his maneuvers from a distance, had been too much charmed with the performance to give warning to the cook; but when he made his appearance, meat-dish and teapot in hand, they gave such a shout as set the whole camp in an uproar, and Toby was fairly worshipped by the soldiers from that day out."

On one occasion he led the whole of the mules out of the corral, one of the herders having left the entrance unguarded, and they having been accustomed to follow the lead of a white bell mare—Toby himself being white.

His destination that time was his mistress' tent, but the way there was through the camp. The rumpus can well be imagined when the soldiers awakened to find an overflow of mules floundering among their tent ropes and upsetting their outfits. They belabored them with clubs, ropes, and picket pins, and this made the mules squeal and bellow to such an extent that the whole camp was soon in an uproar, and the wagon-master in a towering rage threatened to shoot him if he ever caused such trouble again.

But it was only a few days later when his mistress found a grinning orderly at her tent, who held the mules of her ambulance and Toby on a chain and said: "The general sent his compliments, and said he'd shoot the mules and the white horse, too, the next time they pulled the tent-fly down over him."

The story was too good to be kept and the general himself afterwards told how, "lying asleep on his cot, under the tent-fly, where it was cool, he had been waked up by Toby's nose brushing his face. Raising himself, and hurling one boot and an invective at the horse, he was surprised at seeing two mules trying to stare him out of countenance at the open end of the fly. The other boot was shied at them, but there was no time to send anything else. The chain fastening the mules together had become twisted around the pole holding up the fly, and the precipitate retreat of the long-eared pair brought down the heavy canvas upon the general's face."

Another time Toby came to the tent door with a strangely bright polish on his fore-hoofs and a suspicious greasiness about his nose and face. During the night he had got to the baggage wagon belonging to the officer in the next tent—the habit being to put the wagons to

the rear of each tent of the officer to whom it belonged—and had got at two jars of butter and pulled out six or eight sacks of grain with his teeth.

But, as Mrs. Clifford afterwards wrote: "The faithfulness and patience of the horse in time of need made me forgive him all these tricks. Months later—when still on the march, in the most desolate wilderness, in the midst of the pathless mountains, when the other horses 'gave up the ghost,' and were shot at the rate of a dozen a day—Toby held out, carrying me on his back, day after day, night after night, till his knees trembled with fatigue and faintness, and he turned his head and took my foot between his teeth at last, to tell me he could carry me no farther! Not once, but a dozen times he repeated this maneuver; once, too, when we were coming down a very steep hill, he planted his forefeet down firmly, turned his head, and softly bit the foot I held in the stirrup, to tell me I must dismount."

Is there any wonder that Mrs. McCrackin loved Toby with an affection not often given to horses?

But there are many other fascinating passages in her books, descriptive of events on this memorable trip across the plains.

After her arrival at Fort Union the "Mounted Rifles" came marching into camp. Here is her vivid picture of the scene: "Nearer rolled the dust—slowly, slowly, a snail might have moved faster, I thought, than this regiment, famed once as the Rifles, and blessed with the reputation of being very unlike a snail in general character. . . . The slow, heavy tramp of the approaching troops shook the earth like far-off thunder; but the dust was so thick that it was hard to tell where the soldiers left off and the wagons commenced, while the train moved.

At last there came the sudden clanging of trumpets, so shrill and discordant that I put my hands up to my ears, and then the command halted near our camp.

"Let no one dream of a band of gay cavaliers riding grandly on prancing steeds, and with flying banners! Alas, for romance and poetry! Gaunt, ragged-looking men, on bony, rough-coated horses, sun-burned, dust-covered, travel-worn, man and beast. Was there nothing left of the old material of the dashing, death-dealing Rifles? Ah, well! These men had seen nothing for long weeks but the red, sun-heated soil of the Red River country; had drank nothing but the thick, blood-red water of the river; had eaten nothing but the one hard, dry cracker dealt out to them each day, for they had been led wrong by their guide, had been lost, so that they reached Fort Union long after, instead of long before, the Fifth Infantry."

Several times on this trip they came upon mutilated corpses of civilians and soldiers who had been caught unawares by the vindictive and merciless Apaches. She tells of one pathetic incident as follows: "Just at the foot of the rough, endless mountain, the men who had come under the protection of our train from Fort Cummings pointed out where the two mail-riders coming from Camp Bayard—our destination—had been ambushed and killed by the Apaches only the week before. I had heard of these two men while at the Fort, one of whom, a young man hardly twenty, seemed to have an unusually large number of friends among men of all classes and grades. When smoking his farewell pipe before mounting his mule for the trip to Camp Bayard, he said: "Boys, this is my last trip. Mother writes that she is getting old and feeble; she wants me to come

home; so I've thrown up my contract with Uncle Sam, and I'm going back to Booneville just as straight as God will let me, when I get back from Bayard. It's hard work and small pay, anyhow—sixty dollars a month, and your scalp at the mercy of red devils every time you come out.' His mother's letter was found in the boy's pocket when the mutilated body was brought in.

"It was no idle fancy when I thought I could see the ground torn up in one place as from the sudden striking out of horses' hoofs. One of the men confirmed the idea that it was not far from the place where the body had been found. The mule had probably taken the first fright just there, where the rider had evidently received the first arrow, aimed with such deadly skill that he fell in less than two minutes after it struck him."

On an earlier occasion, after they had left Fort Craig behind them, she saw ahead what proved to be a party of soldiers. "They drew up in line as they saw the captain approaching; perhaps they had not discovered my presence in time, for before the sergeant could throw a blanket over the cold, stark form lying on a pile of rocks by the roadside, I had already seen the ghastly face and mutilated limbs of the wretched man who had found a cruel death here only the day before. It was the usual story of two men (civilians), mounted, who were crossing the desert together, when, driven almost crazy with thirst, they had attempted to turn down to the river to fill their canteens, but were attacked and chased for miles by the Indians; one man escaped to Fort Seldon, but the other fell into the red devils' hands, to be tortured to death. The soldiers dug his grave, wrapped him in a gray blanket, and laid him to rest on the silent and lonely desert. Many such scenes as this I have witnessed since;

but there, by the stranger's grave, I knelt to say a short prayer, while the soldiers, with uncovered heads, threw the last earth on the low mound."

Constantly hampered by the Indians; sweltering on the **Jornada del Muerto**,—journey of death—across the waterless desert; floundering in the slush and mud of the **acequias**, or irrigating ditches of the Mexicans and Indians; once nearly swallowed up, Toby and rider, in a New Mexico morass; several times threatened with horrible death as they slid on dangerous shelves of roads hewn out of the face of frightful precipices; once swept away, bag, baggage, mules and ambulance, by the fierce flood of the Rio Grande; several times nearly swallowed up in treacherous quicksands; once left alone on the desert owing to the escape of their mules; reduced to living upon the scantiest of canned rations, the portion of the command sent on to Camp Bayard gladly hailed their arrival at the destined spot, solitary and lonely though it was, in the heart of the wild Apache country, and far, far away from the nearest city of safe civilization.

Let us see what kind of a home this cultured and refined descendant of a noble German family found in the wilds of Arizona: "Our tent looked cozy enough, when finished and furnished. A piece of brilliant red carpeting was spread on the ground; the bedding was laid on planks, resting on trestles; the coverlet was a red blanket; the camp-chairs were covered with bright cloth, and the supper, served on the lid of the mess-chest, looked clean and inviting. The kitchen, just back of the tent, was rather a primitive institution: a hole dug into the ground, two feet long, a foot wide, with two flat, iron bars laid over it, was all there was to be seen. Two or three mess-pans, a spider, and a Dutch oven constituted

our kitchen furniture; and with these limited means an old soldier will accomplish wonders in the way of cooking. Before enlisting, one of our servants had been a baker; the other, a waiter at a hotel; and, between them, they managed the task of waiting on us very creditably. To be sure, my husband's rank entitled him to but one servant from the company; but then I was the only lady with the company, and our company commander was considerate of my comfort."

And now began that phase of Mrs. Clifford's life that seems more incredible than the wildest romance. Lieutenant Clifford had killed a man—in self-defense, he claimed—but the civil officers of the state where the tragedy had occurred had vowed to follow him to the ends of the earth and capture him, bring him back, try him and finally hang him. In some way, either by changing his name or his personality, he had thrown them completely off his track, was now an officer of the United States army, and one might have thought perfectly safe from pursuit and danger. But in a sudden mood of confidence he had told his young wife of the fate that was pursuing him and of what would surely happen should he be discovered. Then, either his brain became disordered by the pressure of his unseen terror, or he became possessed of a devil, for he suddenly developed a belief, a dread, a fear that his wife was determined and anxious to betray him and hand him over to the officers of the law that he might be hanged, and he began a series of midnight terrorizings that would have driven any weak-minded or less courageous woman insane in a week. Is there any wonder that she became nervous—not nervous in that she would scold, or fret, or worry and lay it to the state of her nerves; not that she was

fidgety, or cross, or irritable. But she would grow pale at an unexpected knock at the door, or flush painfully red if she heard a quick footstep behind her for years after. Friends have told me that they have seen her grasp the banister for support, if, looking down the stairs into the hallway, she discovered a form not familiar to her eye; and at night she has begged earnestly of her women friends that they would let her sleep in a room directly and openly adjoining theirs, so that they could rouse her quickly when her cries for help told she was living her awful experiences over again in her dreams.

Later, in one of her stories that was regarded as romance, she told the strictest truth as follows: "They tell me that Silver City has been established within ten miles of the very spot that once looked so hopelessly deathlike and so deserted to me in my despair. For I was in despair. Beautiful as was the country, pleasant as seemed my surroundings, in spite of the devotion shown me by the soldiers who composed the garrison, the respect and attention of the officers, and last, but not least, the undivided affection of my white horse, Toby, I was not only in despair—that is too mild a term—I was living, day and night, in sunlight or darkness, in a state of terror, fear, and suspense, such as cannot be described. In the midst of apparent safety and protection, death stared me constantly in the face—not the swift, sudden death that the Indian's arrow or the ball of an assassin grants, but the slow tortures with which the cunning of the maniac puts its victim to the rack; for my husband was a madman and a murderer, and I was given, helpless and without defense, into his hands. I think the discovery must have paralyzed me, for I cannot now explain to myself the dazed, unresisting state in

which I remained for months after I knew the whole truth. Partly, perhaps, the consciousness that I was thousands of miles away from where help could reach me from my own people, the natural reluctance of a wife to disclose her misery and wretchedness to strangers, and the knowledge of the power which to a certain degree my husband possessed, at least, over his immediate subordinates—all these considerations, a mixture of fear and pride, held me in thrall for long, long days.

"I would tie a strip of flannel around my throat and complain of a bad cold, in order to hide the marks that his fingers had left, where he had strangled me just one degree short of suffocation. With what feeling of gratitude I used to step to the tent door in the morning—when my liege lord gave permission—to take one more look at the sky above me, after a night passed waking, in momentary expectation of a blow from a hatchet he had concealed about the tent during the day, or with the silent horror of the situation growing on me till I was ready to shriek out, 'Be merciful! Kill me at one blow, or pull the trigger the next time you hold the death-cold muzzle of your pistol to my head'—for you must know it was a favorite way he had of amusing himself. He would hold the revolver pressed close against my temple and let that horrid 'click, click' sound in my ear till I was fairly numb with terror. Then he would explain to me in a low voice how utterly impossible it would be for any help to reach me in time if I screamed for help; would dilate upon the numerous strings and loops he himself had added to the fastenings of the tent, and would describe how he could cut me into small bits and roast the bits in the fire, before being discovered, if I ever so much as dared to breathe what passed in

those quiet, peaceful-looking quarters of ours. For our tent had really a cheerful home-look about it. Strictly speaking, there were two tents set up close together in one, and the soldiers, in their solicitude for my comfort, had built a wall some four feet high about it, and the canvas had been partly removed at either end to make room for a fireplace they had built of mud and stones, the chimney reaching high above the tent. So that in reality we had two rooms, a fireplace in each; and altogether our quarters were looked upon as exceedingly fine and comfortable, exciting surprise and envy in the minds of the few stray visitors that passed through the camp. That these visitors were few and far between was a great blessing, as I soon found, for after my husband had once admitted to me that he was a murderer and had fled from justice, he was seized with an insane idea, whenever an arrival was announced in camp, that the officers of the law had tracked him here from Texas, where the crime had been committed years ago, and that I had communicated to them where he could be found. He had cut a round opening in the top of the tent and through the fly—as if the space had been intended for the passage of a stove-pipe—and from this point of observation he could see the dust flying up in the road when anyone approached the camp. Then he would make a spring at me—as a tiger springs upon his prey—grasp my throat with both his murderous hands, and urge me to confess for whom I had sent, and by whom I had sent this message, swearing direst vengeance on all concerned did he but discover them. If, however, the orderly came to the door the next moment to announce that Mr. So-and-so, or Such-a-one had arrived and desired to see the lieutenant, this gentleman was all good nature and con-

descension, sending an immediate invitation to the visitor to come to our tent, or going in person to meet him. I had to smooth my ruffled feathers as best I could, for I knew that the least failure to appear happy and cheerful in the presence of the guest would be rigorously punished as soon as the stranger's back was turned.

"You must remember there was nothing in the country then save military posts at long intervals and a very few poverty-stricken Mexican towns and settlements, separated by hundreds of miles of waterless sand deserts and barren rocks, with Indians of different tribes, but all alike hostile, sprinkled over the whole **ad libitum.** And yet I was often on the point of braving all those horrors to escape the terrors of my captivity and torture. Often when Toby came whinnying around our quarters, I was sorely tempted to cut the fastenings of the tent and make a bold dash for liberty or death; for you must understand that during the lieutenant's absence from the tent I was never permitted to go to the entrance under any excuse. I might have taken an opportunity of that kind to appeal for help, or send word of my wretched condition to the commanding officer by a passing soldier —don't you see? And this he was determined to prevent. Poor Toby, never corraled or hobbled as other horses were, would clatter around the tent for hours, pawing the ground, tugging at the ropes, and scratching at the entrance; but never till the lieutenant made his appearance was I permitted to give him the lump of sugar or other tidbit I had ready for him. Day by day my life grew more intolerable, and I don't know how soon it might have been ended, either by that man's hand or my own, had he not finally bethought him of a way in which I could perhaps benefit him. He had been

placed under arrest for some trifling neglect of duty soon after we reached camp, and though this might have been all the more pleasant under ordinary circumstances as giving him more time to pursue his own pleasure, he began to chafe under this inactivity, and at last concluded that it was a deep, underhanded plot of his superior officers to injure and annoy him. If the conception of this idea strongly suggested one of the common fancies of the insane, the remedy he concluded to adopt certainly afforded proof conclusive that his brain was turned. As, however, I saw in it a possible means of escape, I grasped at it as a drowning man grasps at a straw. His plan was this: I was to apply to the commanding officer for an ambulance and escort as far as Santa Fe, and there I was to lay his grievances personally before General Carleton, and ask at his hands redress and protection for my husband. Redress and protection for **him!** The bitter irony and humor of the thing was not lost upon me even in the abject state of mind I was then in; but I took good care to allow no trace of my real feelings to appear upon my face. The purpose was quickly carried out. Next day the orderly bore a note from me to the captain, written, I need hardly say, under the eyes of my tormentor; and in a little while after, a polite note from him assured me that my train would be ready at the hour mentioned the following morning. Very gladly had this kind-hearted man consented to my request, for, as I learned later, something of the true condition of affairs at our quarters had become known to him through our orderly and the cook, and the captain felt but too happy to grant me safe escort on my way back to my friends, which he thought I was now taking. Women, however, are the most fool-

ish, unaccountable, soft-hearted idiots in creation. The night preceding my departure was spent in great part by the lieutenant on his knees, imploring my forgiveness, vowing reform, and explaining how it was only his great love for me that had made him at times a little tyrannical."

Yet when she begged her husband to allow her to take her horse Toby, he positively refused, and the captain confirmed his refusal, stating that the danger from Indians would be enhanced if she attempted to ride horseback through so dangerous a country.

"Toby, poor fellow, had been confined in the corral, and his whinnies grew first rebellious and then heartbreaking, as dragging at his chain and wildly pawing the ground, he saw the train moving out and leaving him behind. My heart smote me at the horse's cries, if it was only a horse; but the lieutenant had got into the ambulance with me, to go as far as the limits of the post, and was giving me his parting instructions and making his parting promises of repentance and reform, and I did not even dare to express my grief at leaving my dear, devoted friend. Pinkow, the orderly, for whom the lieutenant had obtained the captain's permission to accompany me all the way to Santa Fe and back, sat beside the driver of the ambulance, as I said, while the lieutenant and I sat in the seat behind.

"Hardly had the lieutenant left the ambulance and vanished from sight when Pinkow turned in his seat and faced me with an eager, questioning look in his eyes. I was startled by the man's sudden movement and asked him in some alarm, 'What is it, Pinkow?'

"'Thank God!' he cried, with a great sigh of relief, 'You are free, madam. I have counted the moments

since the lieutenant came into the ambulance with you, dreading that he would change his mind at the last minute and drag you you back to that horrid tent to murder you at his leisure.'

"'Why—Pinkow,' I protested, 'the lieutenant—'

"'—is my commanding officer and has detailed me to wait on you, with secret instructions to bring you back from Santa Fe, dead or alive. Alive if possible; dead, should you refuse to return to the prison he has prepared for you. Do you think, madam, that because your silent, uncomplaining endurance of the lieutenant's tyranny was ignored by the captain and the other officers, it is not known at headquarters? And in the company there is not a man who has forgotten your courage and kindness on the long march out here. All these men here will go into Santa Fe with you if you but say the word; and once under the general's protection, the lieutenant can never more approach or harm you. The captain, though not advised of your intention, feels convinced that you will never return to our camp or the lieutenant again. I have his orders to see that everything you may need on your journeying, whether undertaken with a military escort or on the overland stage, be furnished you, though, indeed, the general himself will see to that, and the captain also thinks that some of the other officers' wives are at Fort Marcy (Santa Fe) at present.'

"'But, Pinkow,' I remonstrated tremblingly, 'I promised to come back; he will come after me if I break my promise; I know he will, and will kill me, wherever he finds me.'

"'Do you suppose the captain will give him permission to leave camp and follow you? Not while he thinks you

will seize upon this opportunity to make your escape. He is under the firm impression that you are anxious to get out of that madman's clutches, and would be surprised if he heard that you had conscientious scruples about breaking your word with him. Do you know,' he continued in a lowered voice, 'that he is a condemned criminal, that he escaped the gallows only by flight, and lives in hourly dread of being recognized and handed over to the civil authorities by his brother officers? And to such a man's power you would return?'

"'It will break his heart if I go and leave him in his trouble,' I cried, thinking of his parting appeals and promises. 'He is not bad, Pinkow; he was young and hot-headed when that man in Texas enraged him, and he shot him in a fit of passion. It has been kept secret so long; why raise up that dread ghost now? And think of Toby; I should never see Toby again, and you heard how he cried. I must go back, Pinkow; oh, I must go back!' And I burst into tears."

Is it possible for words to tell the horror of that drive? Not only did she have the desert to cross, but there was the constant terror that her husband would surely escape, follow, torture and ultimately murder her. "A scorching sun above, a barren waste beneath; a chain of dull brown mountains on the right, a ridge of low hills far to the left. Thus the road winds, drearily, silently, changelessly along. Hour after hour you gaze upon this blank, vast monotone, never daring to hope that one bright spot may greet the eye, but dreading ever that the brooding stillness of the heavy air be rent in sudden horror by the Indian's savage cry. Oh, the long, slow hours that dragged their leaden wings across this waste! To me, there were twin demons lurking in every isolated

clump of lance-weed that we passed. Where the men looked for only one enemy, I feared two—the Indian's painted visage was not more dreaded by me than the diabolical smile I had seen on that madman's face. And I could not shake off the feeling that he was pursuing me— that he was even now on the road I had just passed over."

Day after day the dread of pursuit grew more intense and vivid. One morning when they were delayed by a broken wheel, she cried out to her orderly: "Pinkow, we **must** go on. All last night I dreamed of the lieutenant; he had overtaken us, and everywhere around me was blood—blood. I am going on; if there is no ambulance to be had, they can give me a horse, or I will ride one of the ambulance mules. Somehow, I feel that the lieutenant knows by this time that I mean to escape, and if he catches up with us now he will kill me sure."

On, on, the frantic woman urged her escort. Her nerves racked with the torture to which she had been so long subjected, she was now under the fearful pressure of appalling dread, of intolerable terror. She **felt** the unspeakable horror of pursuit. She **knew** her husband was following her, and just the very day after she had crossed the Rio Grande, as the ambulance was about to start, her direst fears were justified by an exclamation which came from Pinkow. Turning her eyes in the direction they all pointed she saw a horseman, the sight of whom seemed to turn her heart to stone.

"'The lieutenant!' said Pinkow faintly, and involuntarily Sergeant McBeth urged his horse closer up to my ambulance.

"I did not faint, but there was a blank of several min-

utes in my memory, and then I heard a hissing whisper close to my ear.

"'So you tried to get away from me, did you? But you see I have overtaken you, and alive you will never get away from me again. Don't scream or call on those men for help—I have two revolvers with me. I would kill them all, and then tie you to Toby's tail and let him drag you to death. Do you hear me?'

"There must have been something deathlike in my wide-open eyes, for he bent over me with sudden apprehension; but I had heard him. Every word of his had burned itself into my brain as with a searing-iron. The words are there to this day—the Lord help me—and I answered, hardly above a breath:

"'I hear you!'

"Not that I wanted to whisper or speak in a low tone. I could not have spoken a loud word if my life had depended on it, as perhaps it might.

"'Come back into the house with me,' he said in a louder tone: 'I am hungry and tired; neither Toby nor I have had rest or food since leaving camp, except what we could get at a Mexican ranch back here. I knew that they would keep me back at the posts, in order to give you a good start.' He lowered his voice again, and his strong yellow teeth gleamed viciously behind his drawn lips. His hollow eyes were burning with the fire of madness, and strands of long, uncut hair were hanging wildly about his face. He laid his talon-like hand on my arm.

"'Come,' he continued aloud, 'we shall not be able to go from here today; the ambulance will need an overhauling. Come into the house with me!'

"'Never!' I said, speaking low, and trying to speak firmly. 'Kill me right here, if you want to—I shall not go into the house with you.'

"'Then you insist upon bloodshed and open disgrace.' He spoke close to my ear again. 'Remember that I promised to reform, and that you promised to be patient with me and aid me. Is this what your promise is worth? You want to deliver me into the hands of my enemies—to see me wronged and murdered. Come with me and I will forgive you.'

"**He** to forgive **me**!"

"'But refuse and I will kill you and the rest here on the spot.'

"And he raised me from my reclining posture and lifted me from the ambulance to the ground.

"Pinkow stood by, pale and motionless with suspense, but Sergeant McBeth had dismounted and stepped up to me.

"'Madam,' he said, touching his cap, 'the damage to the ambulance can be repaired in half an hour's time; you need not even alight, for we shall not take the mules out at all.'

"'Have the mules taken out, Sergeant,' the lieutenant interposed sharply, 'and let your men dismount. My wife will not continue her journey today.'

"'My instructions are to obey madam's orders, and I see none of my superior officers here who could countermand the order. As soon as madam signifies her wishes, I shall hold my men in readiness to carry out her commands.'

"Every man of the escort had dismounted, and they stood clustered about me as if ready and eager to carry out any order I might give. I saw an appealing look in

Pinkow's eye, and noted the gleam of hate and fury that flashed on him from the lieutenant's bloodshot orbs, while with a quick movement he threw back the old soldier overcoat he had on and displayed the shoulder-straps on the cavalry jacket he wore under it. But even now the gallant sergeant would not submit.

"'Your orders, madam?' he asked, with eager eyes and glowing cheeks.

"'I have none to give, sergeant,' I replied sadly, 'except that you take the best care of the outfit in your command. I thank you and your men for their attention and obedience, and I want them all to have a rest after their long journey.'

"'Stand aside, sergeant,' the lieutenant said harshly, 'I will now take charge of the command, and herewith relieve you of all further responsibility. You will consider yourself under orders to me.'

"He gave me his arm and led me back into the courtyard, where, somehow, the escort had collected, and again I was reminded of a military funeral as I passed through the file of sober-faced, heavily armed men.

"Entering the low door which I had left but an hour ago forever, as I thought, I turned my head wistfully back, and there, at the foot of the courtyard, near the gate, stood Sergeant McBeth, the wind blowing about the folds of his short soldier's cape, his hand resting on the hilt of his cavalry sabre, and his eyes following me with a questioning, pitying look. Sergeant Brown stood gravely holding the door open for us, offering the lieutenant a military salute; but I vainly sought Pinkow with a last, despairing look.

"Suddenly his voice came, rough and broken, from the open gate of the courtyard.

"'Madam,' he cried in evident distress, 'Madam—oh! it is too late. Toby is here, but—'

"Toby! True, had I not seen him totter under the lieutenant's cruel spurring when he was urging him up to the ambulance a while ago? Swiftly and with sudden strength I snatched my hand out of the lieutenant's encircling fingers and was flying back across the yard and outside, where I saw Pinkow leaning, sobbing against Toby's neck. The animal was trembling in every limb, but when he spied me a low whinny struck my ear, and he moved forward a step to reach my side. I rushed toward him, but before I could reach him he had tottered and fallen at my very feet, with a deep, almost human groan.

"I cried out with grief and knelt by his side, stroking his white, silky mane and trying to bed his shapely head in my lap. But his eyes broke even while I was caressing him, and I bent over the faithful, long-suffering animal, and my tears fell hot and fast—tears as honest and sincere as any I ever shed for a human being.

". . . I cannot remember for the life of me how I got back to Sergeant Brown's adobe house. The first thing I remember was the lieutenant's haggard face bending over me, and most unexpectedly his protestations of affection, repentance and reform were as profuse as they had been on the night preceding my departure from Fort Bayard. He needed my sympathy, he said, and my aid, for we **must** now proceed to Santa Fe; it was almost a matter of life and death with him, an officer under arrest, to escape from camp and venture directly into the lion's den—the commanding general's headquarters."

On his arrival, however, at Santa Fe, the presence of his wife availed him nothing. The general ordered him under arrest at once, and commanded him to return to Fort Bayard, there to await trial. Friends sought to intervene between the crafty madman and his yielding wife, in whom a variety of conflicting and strange emotions were contending. To her dismay she found herself at last in the ambulance returning to Fort Bayard in the company of the mentally disordered wretch who still claimed her obedience and fealty as a wife. That return journey was enough to have killed her. A pet dog that had been allowed to ride in the ambulance part of the way was cruelly thrown out, and, when in a state of indecision it made as if it would return to Santa Fe, the lieutenant called a halt, whistled to the dog, and after beating his brains out with the butt of his revolver, shouted in mad fury: "I'll teach you to try and get away from me," and pointing to the quivering body of the poor brute, he called to his wife, "That's the way I serve all runaways."

At all the posts on their return those who had hoped the wife was escaping from her husband when she went north alone, were puzzled at her apparent abject subjection to her husband, and as she says of the commander at Fort Bayard: "Perhaps he was the most puzzled of all. All circumstances considered, it was only proper that he should not call to greet me on our arrival, but he immediately sent his servant to me with supper and compliments. My husband had reported to him at once, had been ordered not to leave his quarters without special permission, and late at night the captain sent an orderly to demand his side-arms. The lieutenant was

furious, but I knew what it meant, though the future proved that all the captain's efforts to ensure safety to me were futile."

For a few days he seemed cowed, then unfortunately one of his men was persuaded to obtain him a two-gallon keg of whiskey from Pinos Altos. This naturally added fuel to the fire of hate and rage that were consuming the madman's bosom, and he vented it all upon his long-suffering but proud-hearted wife. Though his side-arms had been removed, the lieutenant had no difficulty in gaining access to the tool-chest of the company-carpenter, and his wife soon learned that a hatchet was as formidable a weapon in the hands of a madman as a pistol or revolver.

When the court-martial convened the excitement of the lieutenant increased, and his threats and actual violence to his wife grew more intolerable. "I knew," said she, "that the sitting of the court-martial would be as much, and more, of a trial for me than for him, for at the very worst his judges could not and would not take his life, while the preservation of mine would be highly problematical."

One day one of the officers discovered a slight error in the proceedings, which uncorrected would have given the lieutenant a loophole of escape had the verdict gone against him. He called attention to the fact, and that night his poor wife was made to bear the burden of his anger, his spite and his bitter hatred against the man who had circumvented him.

Another day he returned home earlier than usual from the trial, closed the tent and drew a hatchet from under the mattress. He commanded his wife to kneel down

and hold her hands, for he was "going to cut her head open." As she did so—for she knew it was useless to resist, and that if she cried out he would murder her before help could come—he spanned her throat with one hand and with the other held the hatchet above her. Fortunately something distracted his attention, and soon he stumbled upon the whiskey which his wife had hid, and, taking a tumbler full of it, was speedily lulled to sleep. But as he stretched himself out on his bed, he bid her lie where he could touch her with his hand, lest she should open the tent during his sleep and let the soldiers in to murder him.

Though anguished almost to the breaking point, merciful Nature came to the tortured woman's aid, and at length she herself fell asleep. Can anyone conceive her situation when she was awakened as follows. Here are her own words:

"What woke me up I never knew, but as I opened my eyes they fell directly on the sharp edge of the hatchet, and the maniac face of my husband grinning fiendishly behind it. In a moment it flashed on me that he was taking deliberate aim so as to kill me at the first blow, fearing, doubtless, that in my death agony I should scream for help if the blow were not planted full in my brain. Before I could move my head, his other hand was grasping my throat and pressing my head back on the pillow; but the struggle, faint as it had been, changed the position of the weapon in his hand. Then I saw that not only was he trying to get in the most telling blow, but he was also calculating the exact position in which the shadow was thrown on the roof and the wall of the tent. He had evidently replenished the fire, as the night

was cool, to convince Pinkow and the guard that serenity and harmony prevailed in our tent; and the glitter of the drunken fiend's eye was hardly less cruel than the glint of the cold steel of the hatchet. I raised my hand imploringly and tried to speak.

"'Not a word out of you,' he hissed into my ear with an oath. 'I can cut you into little pieces before the guard can get into the tent, and I'm going to do it. So much you get for asking for a guard to protect you. Then I am going to roast you alive for telling the judge-advocate all about me.'

"And he pressed my head back, and again took aim. Presently he laughed, shifted his position and declared he didn't want my brains spattered all over his hands, like the dog's, and putting his heavy hand on my forehead, he brought the hatchet within an inch of my throat, making the motion of drawing it across and across.

"'Steady,' I heard him mutter, 'steady.'

"Whether he meant this admonition for himself or for me, I never knew, but after a moment's balancing he rolled over, the hatchet fell from his nerveless hand on my breast, and in a moment more he slept the heavy, sottish sleep of the drunkard. Hardly daring to breathe, I lay with my eyes wide open, praying for daylight to come, and for some helpful hand to lead me from this dark, dreadful tent and out of the dreary, desolate graveyard of a country.

"At last the day dawned; Pinkow called to the lieutenant what hour it was, and when he saw from the lieutenant's looks that this gentleman had slept all night with his clothes on, he knew that the remnant of whiskey had been found. Coming in to light the fire, he started

back when his eyes fell upon me, and well he might, for when I approached the little mirror over the chimney-board, I saw that there were white hairs among the brown on my head."

This damnable assault was the last straw. The obedient wife died then and the militant woman arose in her might and declared that let the hazards be what they would, she must escape from this living death. Her devoted orderly was informed; he and others plotted how it was to be done; the commandant and other officers heartily co-operated, and at length the long-suffering woman succeeded in getting away. This time it was open, avowed flight. She was sent back, with the most kindly letters to the various post commanders, over the road she had so recently traveled twice, to Santa Fe. The captain himself came and assured her that he had placed a man with a drawn revolver in the lientenant's tent, a sentinel back and front of the tent, and a full company as a cordon around it to prevent any possibility of escape.

Could that long journey have been any other than one long, drawn-out agony? The wonder is that human beings do not utterly succumb under such frightful mental torture. But at last she reached Santa Fe. There General Carleton placed her under the kind protection of General Alexander and his wife who, under full and watchful escort, took her back to civilization.

Yet, strange to say, when they reached Fort Lyons, an express rider who had followed them brought the startling information that the lieutenant had escaped again. Fortunately he was rearrested, and subsequently, though he gained technical liberty, he was placed in such

a position by the army proceedings that he made no effort to follow his wife. The last she knew of him he was dismissed from the service, but from that day to this she has never learned of his whereabouts, alive or dead.

Almost immediately after she made her escape from Fort Bayard other misfortunes befell her which compelled her, for the first time in her life, to gain her own living. Her brother, sister and mother were already in California, and it was natural that she should come there, and for a while she taught German in the South Cosmopolitan School in San Francisco. Then, while she was paying a short visit to Arizona, which always has had a great allurement for her, she heard of the founding of the new magazine of the Pacific Coast, the **Overland Monthly,** by Bret Harte, and she decided to try writing for it. Her first article was entitled "Down Among the Dead Letters," and it appears in the December number, 1869. Harte liked it so well he urged her to write more, and especially some of her army experiences, and stories based upon them. She did so, and in the Volume IV four of her army and desert sketches appear, with an equally prominent scattering in later volumes. Before her first sketch appeared, however, she had been enabled by the influence of the Bancrofts to visit the Harper Brothers in New York, and they accepted one of her sketches and paid her on the spot for it—$45 in ragged greenbacks, the first money she had ever earned by writing.

Now began what may be called the literary epoch of her life. She wrote for many magazines and papers both East and West, until the name Josephine Clifford was one of the well-known names of current literature.

Then, in 1881, Arizona again attracted her. Her army friends were always begging her to come to visit them, and in spite of the horrors she had endured at Fort Bayard, the country itself never ceased to call her, so she yielded to the importunity of friends and—met her fate! For while visiting around she was introduced to many prominent people, among others Jackson McCrackin, a South Carolinian by birth, but now a thorough-going Westerner. He was the discoverer of a well-known and productive gold mine, the speaker of the first legislature ever convened in Arizona, and an attractive gentleman. He fell in love with Mrs. Clifford, wooed and won her, and in 1882 they were married.

Now began the pastoral epoch of her life as Mrs. Josephine Clifford McCrackin. She and her husband moved to a ranch they had purchased in the Santa Cruz mountains, which she named the Monte Paraiso (Mountain Paradise), and there for seventeen happy years she lived with the man she loved, surrounded by all that sincere and devoted affection could give her. During this period she wrote much for a variety of publications, both Californian and Eastern, and many of her sketches were translated and published in German. She had already issued, in 1877, a volume of her collected stories from the **Overland**, so they were called "Overland Tales," and in 1893 a second volume, entitled "Another Juanita," was published.

In a letter written to me but a short time ago, Mrs. McCrackin thus speaks of the ranch and her life there: "So many happy years I spent on Monte Paraiso Ranch, and I had counted on spending the remaining years of my rather stormy life there; but fate had decreed other-

wise, and the forest fire of October, 1899, which swept away every building on the ranch, with contents, was really the beginning of the end, though Mr. McCrackin did not die till December 14, 1904, and I soon after left the mountains and put the land up for sale.

"We had built up such a beautiful place; it was rightly named, before the fire had swept it. And always we had delightful people with us, and in the neighborhood. Old army friends looked in upon us, and Major-General Barry, with his charming wife, knew the ranch before the desolation. Mr. McCrackin had elected this distinguished officer to the Presidential chair while he was still captain in the First Infantry. A young officer, Lieutenant W. Ory Smith of the Seventh Infantry, was also a great favorite with Mr. McCrackin, for 'Billy' Smith's grandfather, William Onry, the Arizona pioneer, had been his friend and 'pardner,' as Mr. McCrackin was the first white man to set foot on the ground where Prescott now stands.

"A very pleasant summer was that of 1899, though it went out with the pall of smoke hanging over it. Ambrose Bierce came up in the Santa Cruz mountains early in the year, with the avowed intention of remaining through the season. Ambrose Bierce, the best-hated and the best-loved man in California, whose renown followed wherever the fear his name scattered had penetrated first. Yet he could be so good and kind and companionable. Though he could have been Mr. McCrackin's son in years, he chose to act as if they were old cronies together, greatly to Mac's delight, for Bierce, too, claimed to be country-bred, and he would turn to Mac for corroboration when he said, 'We used to do so on the farm,

didn't we, Mac?' But he could be merciless in his sarcasm; he hated hypocrisy and was utterly without fear.

"He made his home at the Cotton's resort, though he rented a cottage farther up the hill, where he wrote his manuscripts. To my mind he never wrote more beautiful things than those he wrote here, especially of retrospection, a memory embodying his army days, the most touching, pathetic strain from the depths of a heart that so many thought calloused. For Bierce had been an army officer, and though no one was ever permitted to say 'Major Bierce,' I have always maintained that the army lost a brilliant officer where the world of letters gained a brilliant writer.

"Herman Scheffauer, the young writer, now of London, was a protege of Bierce's, was with him when the forest fire devastated our land and the surrounding country. The fire did not burn below the line of our redwood timber, so the cottages on lower Loma Prieta Avenue, where Bierce lived, were safe. As soon as they could, our friends made their way through the fire, for the destroying element raged in the mountains for nearly a week; and when we together reached the ruins of the Monte Paraiso cottage, I was utterly exhausted, and crying, too, and I leaned against the only chimney that was left standing of the whole house. Mr. Bierce, always sympathetic, had thrown his cape, a remnant of his soldier-days, around me, for my clothes were in tatters; and Scheffauer took the accompanying picture, which Bierce said reminded him of the ruined homes in the South in war time. In every way did this much-dreaded, much-maligned man show his sympathy; and of the writing

material he brought to me after the fire, I still keep envelopes and paper to remember him by."

Of the fire itself, Mrs. McCrackin wrote a graphic account, which appeared in the **Wide World Magazine** for May, 1902. Expecting to sell the ranch, she and her husband had removed to a cottage which they built, intending to spend their last years in quietude and comfort. But the sale was halted in some way, hence they had personally to see after the harvesting of the grapes, apples and other crops. Mrs. McCrackin had been to the fruit house to see how the Chinamen were getting along, and as she returned home she noticed smoke rolling and wavering in the wind on the north ridge of a nearby mountain chain, though several miles away. Her husband poo-hooed the idea of there being any danger, so she retired to rest as usual, but not to sleep. It was not until after three in the morning that she dropped into an uneasy slumber, only to be awakened before dawn to a sense of coming danger. Above the uproar of the storm she at last heard the voice of a neighbor: "For heaven's sake, wake up! You've lost everything. The whole country's on fire! Quick, for heaven's sake, or you'll burn in your beds!"

Opening the door, "Heavens! The sight! The terror of it"—she wrote—"seemed to freeze the blood in my veins; but I did not faint—I knew I must not lose my senses. The blinding, flashing, glaring flames shooting up into the sky, higher than my eyes could follow; the clouds of smoke, muddy, turbulent waves rolling above sudden leaps of fire; the hideous roar and crackle—it was all simply awful. There was nothing but fire and glare and smoke as far as my eyes could see, and I could think

of nothing—my mind was a blank. . . . Monte Paraiso fire-swept—the buildings in ashes! I watched a lot of men, looking like demons in the glare of the fire —brandishing axes, swinging brush hooks, wielding long shovels, whipping the flames and beating the ground with boughs and branches in their desperate efforts to beat back and subdue the fast-encroaching enemy. But I was stunned. I felt no interest in their proceedings. I seemed perfectly indifferent.

". . . Then I saw the chain of fire-fighters slowly retreating; it was daylight now, and one after the other they came nearer to the house. It was safe, they still told me; but I must be calm. Would not some of them have a cup of coffee, I asked. But they all said, 'Not now, pretty soon.'"

The cause of their delay was soon apparent. They had assured Mrs. McCrackin too soon. The men scrambled on the roof of the porch at the back of the house, A little later she saw them jump to the ground, and at the same moment she heard a hissing sound behind her. "I turned in terror, only to see flames leaping up into the crown of the very tree against which I was standing, while at the same moment, the stable, belching flames from its interior, burst asunder with the sound and force of an explosion. . . .

"I gave up everything for lost! In a moment I had untied our horse from the tree, in the branches of which the fire-fiend was already making havoc, and rushed round to the front of the house in order to make my escape down the road. The fire, however, had reached the road before me, setting ablaze everything on either side and cutting off this natural avenue of retreat.

"Where should we go—which way turn? North, east and west were all barred by fire, and our only chance was to get through on the south, though the tall firs on the land of our neighbor were already on fire. Some of them, being strangers to the locality, grew bewildered, and I could not make myself heard in the wild uproar of the destroying flames. Making a dash for some bars in the fence that could be let down, I motioned to the men which way I wanted to go. We had plunged through the vineyard only a short distance when the wind, with a sudden swirl, brought up flames and smoke from the very direction in which I was heading. A little to the west lay the only avenue now open, but this was barred by a stout line fence, on which the men at once got to work. The fire was now crackling in the trees above us, and I was half stifled with smoke and flying ashes. Huddled together here, I suddenly missed Sancho [her pet dog] from our crowd, and though I shouted myself hoarse, it was of no avail; perhaps he was already dead.

"When I saw the fence give way I put Billy's bridle into the hands of the men, while I rushed through the opening first of all. My false courage had left me, and I ran screaming, but always straight on, away from the fire, through orchards and vineyards, scaling or breaking down fences as I came to them. What I saw when I turned my head only drove me on the faster—the same blinding, glaring ocean of fire, the waves of flame rolling high as the tree-tops, in which fiery serpents seemed to be hissing in rage and fury, and clouds of suffocating black smoke. Every now and then pieces of burning wood came hurtling through the air, murky with smoke, and made still hotter by the rays of the sun.

"Presently I came to a fence which I could neither climb nor break down, and I ran back to the highway, where, in the few houses that stood here, the women had all their possessions bundled up, ready to move, while the men folk were away fighting the fire. None of these women succeeded in stopping me, but when I reached the bottom of the next hill I sank exhausted on the steps of a veranda, where friendly arms were laid around me."

Soon she saw the men who had been so unselfishly working to quell the fire at her house. "We could save nothing. We tried hard to save the piano, and Mr. Burrell badly burned his hands trying to roll it out, but it burned up under the trees outside. We can do no more, and the Meyers have sent an urgent message for help, so we must go on there."

At last she was able to reach the spot on the road from which cries of admiration had always sprung from visitors and travelers as they passed by. "I gave but one look toward the scene of desolation and ruin, where only an hour before had stood our tree-sheltered, flower-decked 'Forest Nook.' Nothing was left but the pitiful stumps and blackened bodies of the great spreading madrones; the tall firs lay dead among smouldering ash heaps; the fire-crisped leaves on the charred, half-burned branches of the oaks were falling, one by one, to the heat-baked ground.

"'All go,' the old Chinaman had sobbed a little while ago. 'All go,' I repeated after him, but I did not sob—I could not."

And when later they were able to go to the larger ranch house of Monte Paraiso, it "was not easy to find

the road, for the whole stretch of the country was now one blackened region, with rills of fire still running through it. We found, however, that we had only to follow the trail made by the half-burnt bodies of rabbits, foxes, skunks and wild-cats, who had evidently made for the open road when driven from their lairs by the fire. Birds, partly consumed by the flames, had dropped in their flight and lay thick strewn along the land. Every now and then I had to stoop hastily to crush out the flames that came lapping up the edge of my skirt as I picked my way along. Sancho, poor beast, would howl dismally when his foot accidentally stirred up a bed of hot coals, and he limped worse than ever.

"Alas for Monte Paraiso and its groves and gardens! The melted glass from the tall windows lay in lumps where the frames had dropped from their settings; there were a few melted door-knobs and nails by the thousand, but no vestige of the building they had come out of. Only the one big chimney, all-sufficient for the sunny clime we lived in, marked the place where the house had stood. The ramshackle building called the fruit house, the oldest on the ranch, had been left by the fire in mocking irony. As for the rest, barn, stable, Chinaman's house, wagons, ploughs, harness, hay—'all go.'"

It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good, and this great forest fire and the consequent destruction of scores of acres of giant redwoods called attention to the fact that these monarchs of the forest were fast disappearing. Having had her heart wrenched at seeing her own glorious trees laid low, Mrs. McCrackin wrote a rousing article in the Santa Cruz Sentinel of March 7, 1900, calling upon the people of the state to awake and save the

redwoods. Her letter was copied everywhere. It was made the text of addresses and harangues here, there, and everywhere, nearly all of which highly favored her suggestion. Andrew P. Hill, a tree enthusiast, a fine photographer and an artist in oils, had found near the coast in Santa Cruz country a "Big Basin" filled with these giant redwoods, and he and Mrs. McCrackin began to work together to see if this "basin" of majestic trees could not be saved for the people forever. Hugo de Vries, the eminent Holland scientist, in his "To California," published in 1905, in Haarlem, Holland, thus speaks of Mrs. McCrackin's endeavors and their results:

"Up to March, 1900, the world was threatened with the loss of the Sempervirens forest. It was almost too late. The Big Basin, up to that time, was the only forest which had not yet been touched by lumbermen, but the cost of lumber then was so high that lumber companies already were considering the value of these wonderful giants.

"For several years past the forest had been owned by a lumber company, and when all the surrounding country had been stripped of its growth, this company did not hesitate to move their saw mill to the oldest, the most beautiful, the richest part of this basin. All was in readiness, and the only thing they waited for was the order to commence.

"It was at that time that the danger bell began to ring. The Californians commenced to realize that they were bordering the loss of one of Nature's greatest wonders, which has become the fame of the state of California, and which has added so greatly in the state's wonderful development.

"It was Mrs. Josephine Clifford McCrackin who called

our attention to this danger mark, by writing an article in the Santa Cruz Sentinel, pointing to that calamity. Everyone at once realized what would be the outcome unless effective steps were immediately taken. Mrs. McCrackin received assistance and co-operation from all sides, and by circulating photographs, etc., the wide-awake citizens soon had a thorough understanding of the true state of affairs, and the trees were saved."

Largely under Mrs. McCrackin's influence the Sempervirens Club was formed, Sempervirens being the specific scientific name of the giant redwood—**sequoia sempervirens**—the everlasting redwood. The object of the club was to save the redwoods of the Big Basin, containing a greater number of giant redwoods on a given space than any other spot in California or in the known world. The object of the club appealed to the local pride of every organization in the state—the Native Sons, the Native Daughters, the Pioneers, etc., and in due time 3,800 out of 14,000 acres were purchased by the state, named the California Redwood Park, put under the administration of a non-political commission and a warden appointed to give it adequate care, attention and protection. Every year since its acquisition the Club has officially visited the park. On its first visit it was honored with the presence of Dr. Hugo de Vries, who in European scientific circles has long occupied the same position that Luther Burbank here holds in the estimation of the scientists and the general public.

As one result of her work for the redwoods, Herman Scheffauer wrote the following exquisite tribute which he dedicated to her:

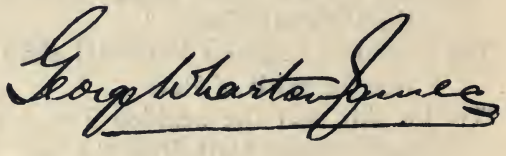
SAVIOR OF THE SEQUOIAS.

The Titans of the forest, to the east winds sprung forth
from the sea.
Give them, O worthy 'mongst women, their thanks and
their greetings for thee!
When, under their ancient, o'erarching arms, your feet
shall bestir the grass,
Bright dews from their boughs shall be shaken on your
reverent head as you pass.
From their roots, clutching deep in the earth, to each
patriarch's head in the skies,
The race of these giants had vanished, as the race of
mortals dies;
Coeval with Earth and defying Time, they had perished
by the blade,
If never your pitying heart and hand the hand of the
vandal had stayed.
Therefore, in the forest silences, in the tongue of the
noblest trees,
A name is whispered with love to the winds in their
twilight symphonies.
They that are older than Egypt or Ind and shall outlive
the Ultimate Man—
The deathless sequoias immortal shall hold that name
like the spirit of Pan.
'Tis for this that the bearded Titans to the east wind
have sprung forth from the sea,
Give them, O worthy 'mongst women, their thanks and
their greetings for thee!

Nor was her work for the redwoods the limit of her beneficial endeavor. Filled with that love that only great natures feel for the smaller brothers and sisters of the

forest and the air, and appalled by the reckless slaughter of songbirds on all sides, she sent forth, in 1901, a number of clarion notes of warning and then organized the first bird-protection society of California, entitled "The Ladies' Forest and Song Birds Protection Association," of which she is the honored president. With pen and voice, everywhere in the state, when the way is opened for her, this whole-souled lover of the birds is found working in their interest, and thousands of people in California owe their first introduction to humanitarian principles, as far as birds and animals are concerned, to what Mrs. McCrackin has said or written.

In 1904 Mr. McCrackin died, and this woman of noble, generous impulses, of dignified family, of varied fortunes, was suddenly thrown upon her own resources. For there was a heavy mortgage on Monte Paraiso, and she was incapable of running the ranch and making it pay. But with that unquenchable spirit of freedom and independence that had always led her to triumph over the worst of obstacles, she moved to Santa Cruz and took up the burden of gaining her own livelihood.



HER RED HAIR

CHAPTER I.

A shrill scream from the locomotive, a series of spasmodic jerks, and the train came to a sudden halt. A rush of passengers to the side of the car on which outside could be heard the swift running of the train men, and then a crowding to the door and platform, to investigate the cause of the stoppage and learn the probable duration of the delay. As one and the other of the passengers sauntered back to his seat, after a little while, the "hot box" which had caused the trouble was mentioned in no friendly manner, as almost every individual on the train would seem to have been hindered and delayed by it in the carrying out of some most important piece of business, which was to have been transacted immediately upon the arrival of this train in San Francisco.

One person, however, seemed to be perfectly unaffected—a young woman, sitting rather toward the end of the car, which she had not left at all while the rest had rushed out, or stretched their necks from the platform steps, when the train had stopped. She had not even crossed to the other side of the car, but remained where she was, gazing steadily out of the window, over a country entirely new and strange to her, for she and her companion had boarded this train a few hours since, at a station where the Eastern train crossed this line.

Her companion, a gentleman in faultless traveling suit and followed by the colored porter from the Eastern

train, loaded with wraps and handbags, looked younger at first glance, than the lady with him; and handsomer, people would have declared, than she. Seating himself opposite her in the small space left by traveling-bags and rugs, he had deliberately surveyed the other occupants of the car, bestowing, last of all, a most critical look upon his mate. To say that disapprobation was expressed in the colorless, aristocratic face with its straight nose and insolent, disdainful lines about the mouth, would be using a very mild term; for the features grew sharp and the eyes wrathful, as they rested upon the half-averted head and graceful shoulders of the lady.

"What in the name of all that is ugly, have you done to yourself now?" he asked angrily. "What is that shabby dress for? Did you borrow that hat from a scarecrow? Have you lost the lace scarf that I bought you?" With each sentence his voice grew higher, and his nostrils quivered with passion as he went on. "And where, in the devil's name, is your hair—what have you done with it? Just today, when it is of the utmost importance that you should display that accursed red mane of yours, you must needs go hide it under that abomination of a Quaker bonnet. Was ever a man irritated and angered by an obstinate piece of femininity as I am; it would try the patience of a saint. And what will Dick Lockhart think when he comes to meet a dowdy-looking thing like you? But you shall pay for it—oh!" He ground his teeth with rage while tossing around the various satchels and valises, in a rough way beside him, as though they could feel the abuse he gave them.

The lady in the meantime had sat rigid and cold. Her lips, only lightly closed when first he spoke, had been

pressed more and more firmly as he went on with his angry tirade, till at last her face had really assumed a shade of obstinacy with which he had charged her. Only once, when he had alluded in such uncomplimentary terms to her hair, had she turned her eyes upon him,—the eyes of a creature hurt and grieved beyond reconciliation and forgiveness,—and after that she had remained motionless, till the slamming of a door advised her that her companion had left her, to seek consolation in the buffet or the smoking-car. Then life had come back to her inanimate form, and she looked furtively this way and that, to see whether the little scene just enacted had found spectators in the car. But she was quickly reassured on this point; the few passengers in the car after taking the measure of the new-comers upon first entering, had forgotten them again before the flood-gates of the man's wrath had opened upon her.

Slowly and by almost imperceptible degrees the change in her outward appearance had continued after this—by denuding her throat of the little white collar she wore, drawing off her delicate gloves, and removing a gleaming gem or two from her fingers. All these small objects she placed carefully in the most elegant of the traveling-bags marked with a monogram and the name of a large city in the Southwest—hiding it, after closing it again, under a heap of wraps and mufflers, on the seat which the gentlemen had occupied. Then drawing toward her a worn, unsightly valise, she placed it beside her, laying across it an old, faded shawl.

And there she had sat through long weary hours, the abused Quaker bonnet drawn well down over her eyes, the naked hands half-hidden under the shawl. Once or

twice, as the train halted at some way station, she had cast keen glances toward the door, opened to admit or let out passengers; and more than once had she grasped the shabby valise as if to leave the car with it. But always a look of indecision and despairing helplessness had come into her face, and the hands had fallen irresolutely away from the bag.

But now, while passengers were moving from seat to seat, utilizing the temporary stoppage for communicating to each other their railroad views in general and the running of this train in particular, while all eyes were turned in the direction where the offending "hot box" was known to be, a quick decision seemed to inform the still figure with sudden life, and quietly rising in her seat she lifted the small valise lightly in her hand, threw the shawl over it and walked steadily to the rear end of the car. Stepping to the side of the platform remotest from the "hot box," she made sure that none of her fellow passengers were loitering here, then swiftly dropped from the steps to the ground and walked briskly to where the faint glimmer of a footpath could be seen, which led into a clump of live-oaks, with an undergrowth of wild shrubs that reached in some places clear to the limbs of these low-growing, spreading trees. Walking with easy, swinging step, as free from haste as from lingering, she had reached and passed the edge of the thicket before the clanging of the bell and the grinding of the wheels told her that the train had started.

CHAPTER II.

Then she could conquer her mad desire to run at the top of her speed no longer. Hampered by her load, light as it was, she ran with such wild haste that the rush of air seemed to catch in her throat and cut as with knives while it entered her lungs. Her heart leaped up till it strangled her, and flames seemed to dart and shoot before her, as if her brain were on fire and the flames were breaking out of her eyes. But she struggled on, panting, half-blind, with trembling limbs, and feet that stumbled against the roots and rocks obstructing the narrow trail.

She had reached a little rill of water now, so small here that a small plank spanned it, but broadening its bed, a piece farther on, so as to require the heavy bridge across which the train had but now thundered. Utterly exhausted she threw herself beside the tiny stream, clasping her hands over her beating heart and closing her eyes to shut out the blood-red glow she saw before them. But it was only to gain breath, not to rest, that she had paused; the next moment she was up again, and with one eager, straining look in the direction from whence she had come—to assure herself that she saw no dreaded form approaching, she hastened on blindly following the trail to where it might lead. Now she heard the bell ringing on its approach to some town and she was tempted to turn back for the sound seemed to come from the direction toward which she was hastening; and it was only when coming suddenly upon an opening in the trees she saw the path branching off in the opposite line

to where the smoke from the locomotive arose, that she felt reassured and ran on. Not far, however; a sudden dizziness came, her burning cheeks blanched, and only a most determined effort saved her from a faint. But her hair, the heavy braids loosened in her swift run, came tumbling down over back and shoulders—a mass of silk with the sheen of gold in its dark brown waves. A light wind blew soft tresses across her bosom and over her face. With angry impatience she raised her arms to gather up the loosened masses of hair, while for the first time the tears sprang to her eyes.

"'That accursed red mane'"—she apostrophized the heavy braids as she tugged and twisted at them as if she would pluck them out by the roots. "'That accursed red mane'"—she repeated with eyes ablaze and and indignation ringing in her voice; then the hot tears fell again, and rocking to and fro in helpless despair she moaned—"oh! what have I done, and what shall I do?"

A crackling in the underbrush started her, and she went on again, always directly away from where she had last seen the smoke of the locomotive arise. She lost the trail and struck it again, without knowing it, for she could see where the thicket lifted and the live-oak grew no longer.

Then at last she drew breath and looked around her. Stopping where she could see a wagon-road in the distance, she made her despised hair still more secure under her bonnet, brushed the leaves from her woolen dress, folded her shawl neatly over her handbag, and assuming an air of tranquility she was far from feeling, she walked toward the road and instinctively turned to the right. It was a country road, perfectly open at this point, but

bordered by fences, a piece farther on, and houses visible in the distance. To her left, far off, she could see the outlines of what seemed a very moderate-sized town—undoubtedly the place where the train had last stopped. Turning her back hastily on this view, she walked with steady steps along the road till she reached a rustic fence which soon changed its character and became a neat white picket paling, surrounding grounds both spacious and tasteful. The center piece was a house, well-covered with the roses, the clematis and the smilax Californians are so proud of flinging into the faces of their Eastern cousins. In a different frame of mind it might have struck her that there was something odd about this home, a new half, apparently all bay-window, plate-glass and turret-roofs, and the old half, vine-covered, with common-sized windows and plain cottage roof. But had she been in more placid mood even her attention would have been drawn away from all this by the sounds that came from the interior of this pretentious pile—the cries of a child, which from a fretful wailing had grown into a persistent and distressful sob.

It was not the lusty, naughty screeching of a healthy little brute; but a continued, pitiful cry, that went straight to her woman's heart and made it ache to take the little one to her breast. She stood still and listened. The cries did not cease, and she could distinguish that they came from the less elegant side of the house. Both parts of the house looked coldly and with an air of exclusiveness upon the world outside, but that was evidently life in the older wing. With beating heart she opened the gracefully-designed gate and traversed a gravelled walk that led to the house. As she approached

she could see signs of childlife about the premises; and an evident lack of neatness and order made itself felt. A copy of Mother Goose had been squeezed in between the slats of the window-shutters; a decapitated doll-baby lay sprawling on the well-built but badly swept vestibule floor, and a rocking-horse had broken its neck in trying to make the descent of all the steps at once. A single glance showed her all the details; it was plain that there were more children here to take care of than the one whose wailings still tore her ears and heart, and——. She did not stop to think out her thought, but resolutely approached the closed portal through which came the cries of the little one, fainter now and more plaintively.

Startling the echoes and herself with the reverberations of the heavy knocker, she paused with bated breath to listen to the patter of quick feet which almost instantly appeared. A moment later she helped push back the heavy door, and looked down on a small, stout specimen of humanity, a girl of about four, who gazed keenly at her for a second before lifting up her voice and calling back over her shoulder:

"Papa, papa! She's dot red hair! It's our new dirl, shure!"

Then, turning hurriedly back she seized our heroine by the hand and dragged her along the hall, charging her to "make haste and take my little buzzer; he c'y, c'y, c'y all the time and papa can't make him hush up."

Dropping her satchel down against the wall, and throwing her hat on top of it, she followed her mentor into the room where "little buzzer" lay in a child's crib over which a broad-shouldered man was bending, trying vainly to soothe the distress of the occupant. Without

further ceremony the four-year-old pulled her father manfully by the coat-tails, urging him to come away and let the new girl take the little brother.

Lifting the child from the crib, the new girl gave one look into the pinched, drawn face, and exclaimed in accents of the deepest pity:

"Why, he's hungry! Poor little chap, no wonder he's crying."

The man looked on in helpless surprise.

"Hungry!" he repeated, "why, that can't be. Bridget must have fed him before she went to town. Surely I saw his little basin there just now, and it was empty."

Miss Four-year-old again broke forth.

"No, no, papa; baby was asleep when Bridget went away, and Bobby ate the baby's dinner."

Bobby, who had sat unmoved through this controversy, absorbed in transferring the "animals two by two, the Elephant and the Kangaroo"—from his Noah's Ark to the little table in front of him, answered stolidly in the affirmative when the question of having diverted the baby's dinner to his own purposes was put to him directly. The starving infant in the meantime might have cried itself to sleep hungry, had not the little girl once more come to the rescue.

"Bridget put some more dinner on the stove for baby; she said the little pig would eat this." Evidently the young lady was quoting "Bridget" verbatim et literatim, but no attention was paid to the offensive epithet.

"Where is the kitchen?" asked the stranger, looking around for a wrap to throw over the child, still feebly wailing in her arms.

The little girl tugged at the remains of what had been a costly India shawl, tangled up in the multitudinous coverings piled on the crib; the father coming to her aid with the half apologetic remark that he would have to look after his men, but would return immediately. As he passed out of the door through which she had entered, her youthful guide proceeded to draw aside a portiere which hung over the entrance to what was evidently the sleeping-room of the children, from whence they crossed a little porch and reached the kitchen by a short-cut.

The child in her arms had ceased its wailing and watched with longing eyes the short preparation necessary for the satisfying of its hunger. The faithful Bridget, whoever she might be, had left an appetizing bowl of broth on the cook-stove, and the child was soon crowing over its contents as it lay comfortably bedded in the lap of its new-found friend.

"What's your name?" The question, although propounded by childish lips, seemed so brutally abrupt that it startled both the woman and the little one in her lap, but she replied with quickly regained self-possession, "Annie, and yours?"

"Bee-a-twis," she informed her proudly, but they call me Trixy."

"That is a very pretty name indeed; and what is the name of your little brother here?" Annie continued her inquisition.

Trixy struggled hard to articulate something which was plainly beyond her power, till at last she ejaculated the two distinct syllables "De Cobb!"

"De Cobb," repeated our friend a little amused at the

odd name. But Trixy, red in the face with exertion, protested:

"No, no—not De Cobb, Daycob."

"Yes, to be sure, Jacob," assented the girl. How very stupid in me not to understand the name. And you call him Cobby—do you not?"

"I always call him that," affirmed Trixy. "Can I have that?" she asked as she pointed to what was left of the broth.

"Certainly." Annie was quite bewildered to think that she should be looked upon as one having authority there.

CHAPTER III.

While Trixy was busy with spoon and fingers, Annie thought it no harm to take notes as far as might be. The dimensions, furnishing and finishing of the kitchen were all on a generous scale; but the incongruity that had obtruded itself in the other portion of the house, even in the brief glimpse she had had of it, seemed to repeat itself here. From china-closet to table-drawer, a strange mixture of superfine and coarse homely things, seemed to exist. Beside the most delicate hand-painted cake-basket and sugar bowl to match, there stood a common white cream jug, and in among the remains of a dainty fish-service stood crowded a lot of hard featured, staring, glaring crockery. In the table drawer were pearl headed, silver bladed knives, hobnobbing with stout blackhandled rural cutlery. Silver and pewter spoons were on perfect equality here; and the finest, most sensitive cutglass seemed to stand in awe of the coarser grain of the tumblers and pitchers surrounding it.

The child in her lap—or at least its clothing—showed the same marked disharmony. A little sacque of the finest silk velvet, woefully crumpled and creased, had been drawn over the dress of common calico, badly made and a world too wide for the meager bit of humanity it enfolded. Wide as the garment was, however, it did not half clothe the child, for its lean arms seemed unnaturally long, and protruded hungrily from the sleeves, making the thin hands look like claws, and matched in ugliness only by the sharp, bony nose in the narrow face. Even

the head was mis-shapen, and not the most glowing fancy, not the most ardent mother-love, could have found anything beautiful or lovely in the child's exterior except its eyes, which were dark and soft, and had in them the appealing look which we see in the eyes of a lost dog.

A glance from the window showed her that a fog had drifted in, obscuring the sun which had shone so brightly on her flight from the cars. She shuddered; not so much from cold as from the recollection of her breathless journey. But a pair of shining eyes had been steadfastly regarding her; and with an instinct of watchfulness, born perhaps of the constant vigilance she maintained over the "little beggar," Trixy exclaimed with much concern:

"Cold, Annie? I'll det some kindlin's and you make a fire in the room. Bridget said you would when you came." And hustling around like an old housewife of fifty, Trixy filled her apron with "kinlins," while Annie was still pondering the question of how Bridget had known that she would build a fire in the sitting-room of the mansion tonight.

But she followed Trixy back into the room, laid the child in its crib while Trixy ran back to the kitchen for a piece of cake to fill the mouth wide open and pouring forth a series of howls of the "ozzer buzzer" who had at last become weary of Father Noah's menagerie. She soon started a cheerful blaze in the broad, open fireplace. Then she took up the child again, which reached out its long scrawny arms to her and cooed and crowed softly when Annie seated herself near the fire with it, smiling its gratitude and fairly glowing with content. Trixy had climbed up on the couch beside her, and the "ozzer

buzzer" was enjoying his cake—at least such portions of it as were not scattered over the carpet.

Traveling down the length of the room, her eyes lighted up as they rested on a handsome grand piano, close up to which was pushed a plain deal table on which stood dishes and a saucepan, and children's toys—all in the wildest confusion. On the piano were deposited articles of dress, shoes and socks of the children, and, conspicuous above everything else, a gentleman's tall silk hat, with a broad band of crepe around it.

The chairs,—some airily and elegantly fashioned, and covered with brocade silk and plush; others plainly importations from the kitchen,—and verandas were littered with more articles of clothing, ranging from a coarse kitchen-apron to the black broadcloth dress-suit of a gentleman. The cushion which Trixy had pulled up to the fire, was fit to grace the boudoir of the most fastidious dame; but the stool she dragged out from under the lounge for Annie's feet to rest on was a homely wooden one and cheaply made.

The little boy's lower extremities were clothed in silk attire, while an apron of the coarsest gingham covered waist and arms. Trixy herself wore an apron so small and tight that her fat arms looked like well stuffed sausages; while her stockings dangled loosely about her sturdy, well developed legs. In short, the room and its inmates would have conveyed the impression that each child, as it arose each morning, dived into the various piles of clothing and wore for the day whatever it happened to fish out.

Still the house, as far as she could see it, had an air of comfort and plenty about it, and only a hand seemed

lacking to bring order out of chaos. Had Annie not been so entirely engrossed by her own communings she might have tried to read the riddle of these strange surroundings; as it was, her thoughts centered in the one question: had she found shelter here—dared she hope a home, or must she go forth again to find a place to lay her aching head for the night. The early spring day was closing, and the firelit room was so bright compared to the fog and drizzle outside. Oh, if she could but stay.

Just then two warm little hands clasped themselves about her neck, and Trixy pushed her face close up to hers, and to the manifest discomfort of the "little buzzer," who protested to the utmost of his weak ability.

"Say!" she opened conversation in a persuasive tone, "You's dot red hair—ain't you? And you must be cross-eyed, for Aunt Tildy said so. What's the matter with your eyes? They ain't so—" and her eyes underwent the most fearful gymnastics in order to produce a squint.

Poor Annie! Her heart sank as she realized that she was not the new girl with the red hair and the squint that was expected here. But, happen what might, she would not usurp the place, coveted, perhaps, by some one as much in need of a home as she herself. So when, at this moment she heard a step in an adjoining room, and the master of the house made his appearance under the portiere in the doorway, she arose hastily to meet him, with the little one still in her arms.

"From your little daughter I understand that you were looking for a new girl today and I must tell you that I am not the one you were expecting. I started out only today to hunt work and yours was the first place I came to. You were led into the mistake by the color of my

hair and I discovered it only through the child's close observance of my eyes—which are not crossed."

She said it hastily but in all sincerity; the man's firm lips, however, relaxed into something of a smile as he answered: "The fact is that my little girl's grand-aunt had promised to send us a new girl today, but as she did not come, you are welcome to stay if the place suits you. Bridget, the cook, has gone to town to make some purchases; when she returns she will instruct you in your duties and tell you what wages you get."

She felt so thankful; should she make him a courtesy and say "thank you, sir"? Would it be the proper thing to do in her position? Fortunately he had already left the room before she had decided; and she hugged the little one closer to her breast, to express her gratitude.

Not long afterward she heard the sound of wheels outside, and after a flutter of terror which she could not quell, the tones of a cheerful, resolute voice convinced her that there were no grounds for fear of pursuit, and after a short conversation held outside by this voice and the one already known to her, a tall, stout Irish girl, with dark eyes and kindliness written all over her wholesome face and figure, came into the room.

Still, Annie could not but feel the searching glance upon her face as she addressed her.

"And ye're not the gerrul Mrs. Ault sent here, Mr. Winters does be telling me. Well—ye're welcome here, for I need a help, and the children is hanging to yez as if they liked yez. All but Bobby; and I'll warrant he ate his little brother's dinner after I went away and has never left his chair nor his Noah's Ark since."

And sure enough, Master Bobby was back in his chair by the low table set out with the animals; and the laugh they had at his expense seemed to establish friendly relations between the two women at once.

"You stay here wid the childers till I call ye to supper," Bridget decided to Annie's delight. "You must be tired, for Mr. Winters says you walked out here from the cars; after supper we'll settle about your wages and your work." She pronounced it "wor-ruck," but the sound was pleasant to Annie's ears, all the same.

Bobby, however, was not so firmly settled in his seat as his friend had supposed him to be; and after a series of preliminary sniffs and snuffles he broke out into one of his most terrible yells, just as his father entered the room from the hallway.

"What is it, Bobby? Trixy, my girl, what does he want? Get it for him—quick!" The resignation in his tones, and the alacrity with which he moved forward, told a story that Annie understood at once; as the new girl, however, she could do nothing just yet but wait to see what part she was expected to take in these little domestic dramas. Her presence was entirely overlooked by both father and daughter in their anxiety to propitiate the household tyrant.

"He wants his marbles," Trixy announced breathlessly, after listening intently to the disconnected words shot out between yells, and already she was diving for marbles under chairs, lounge and table.

But the cherub yelled all the louder when she laid them down before him and Trixy, as interpreter, soon informed her father that he wanted his two big marbles.

"But where are they?" he asked apprehensively; and Trixy, after a hasty survey of the room, with unerring instinct struck out for the piano, climbed from the chair to the table, from the table to the shining surface of the instrument, pulled the tall hat with the crepe band toward her and simply overturned it. With a little scream Annie covered her ears as two large sized marbles rolled out and woke rumbling echoes inside of the piano before they dropped to the floor. No one heeded her and it was only when both marbles were placed in the fat fist of Master Bobby that he stopped his roaring, and his humble slaves drew a breath of relief.

In the meantime Paul, the young German who was coachman, butler and stable-man on the place, besides being Bridget's aid and factotum, was helping in the kitchen after his outside work had been performed. His patroness was entertaining him with a description of their new girl with the red hair.

"She was never brought up to service," she concluded in her resolute, decided manner, "but she's a good gerrul, and I don't care where she comes from."

"Now, Bridget," her young aid protested, "you take strange people into the house like that, and we'll all wake up some morning with our throats cut."

"And sure and waren't ye a stranger yerself, ye young Dutchman, when ye came here asking for work?" Bridget turned the tables on him. And Paul on the instant changed back into the German peasant-boy of three years ago, setting his right hand slowly in motion scratching among the shock of yellow hair behind his capacious ear.

But peace was soon restored, although Bridget, to punish her naughty protege a little more, seated Annie at the table when supper was ready, and ordered Paul to do the waiting instead of herself. For the life of him he could see nothing about the woman with the colorless face, the downcast eyes and the hard twisted red hair, to become enthused over; especially as she wore a dress so shabby that Bridget would not have worn it in the kitchen even; and the boy told the honest truth when he reported that he did not think her anything like so good looking as Bridget herself.

"You don't understand, me b'y," Bridget informed him, mollified in spite of herself by the compliment, "it's a heart broken look she has in her eyes, though I grant ye she's not a beauty."

The head of the house was the only one who had no comment to make, there was simply a great relief written on his face when supper passed without any outbreak on Master Bobby's part. And when after leaving the table, he stopped by the crib of his youngest and found him asleep with a smile on his face, the wrinkle between his eyes seemed less deep, and he took one of the lamps and retired to his own room, without so much as a look at the new girl who had taken such a load off his shoulders and his mind.

But Bridget made amends by the cheerful smile she bestowed upon her when, having put her charges to bed, she came back to the kitchen for further orders.

"Well, Annie," she said, "if ye'll just take charge of the children and kind o' straighten things out around the house a bit, I'll (she spoke it Oill) excuse you from kitchen work at present. That is," she added hastily,

"I mean for you to straighten and sweep up this side of the house"—indicating with a toss of her head the rooms Annie had seen in the course of the afternoon; "the other part is not in use now."

Annie expressed her readiness to obey orders, and then asked if Bridget did not want her to put the feathers on the bonnet which the kitchen queen was trying to decorate becomingly.

"Dade thin; ye may if ye wish," was the ready response; and in a little while there was built up a thing of beauty which Bridget went into raptures over, and Paul himself was forced to admire.

"Why—you're a milliner, Annie; a fine one—that's what ye are."

"Yes," the girl assented after just a second's hesitation, "I have learned the trade."

"And can ye make ridicules too?" asked Bridget excitedly. "For I can go to town now, since you've come, and to church of a Sunday, and a body do like to look respectable. I've got a beautiful piece of velvet that I'd like made up into one av them handbags that the ladies do be carrying now; do ye just stop till I get it."

And digging a bunch of keys out of some mysterious corner of the kitchen cupboard, she vanished into the prohibited side of the house, it seemed to Annie, to reappear, after a time, with what proved to be a piece of plush of the exquisite blue of the German cornflowers and of finest texture.

"That," decided Annie at once, "should be embroidered in silk, with wheat ears just the shade of the wheat among which cornflowers grow in Germany."

At last Paul was moved.

"Oh! You have seen them—the blue cornflowers and the red poppies in the wheat fields in my country."

"Yes," she assented in some confusion, "I was there—with—with a family. I have no silk, Bridget," she continued, "but if you let Paul pick out the right color some time when you are in town, I will work it for you."

And the three parted for the night, the best of friends and with the utmost confidence in each other.

CHAPTER IV.

The fog of the previous night had vanished; the sun shone brightly when Annie awoke and she could not but listen to the blithe singing of the birds as she dressed hurriedly before "the childers" should awaken. Paul and Bridget had had their breakfast when she reached the kitchen; but Bridget expressed not the least displeasure at the tardy appearance of the new girl.

"Oi'm glad enough to get the childers off me hands," said she with a sigh of relief as she placed breakfast on the table for them.

Nevertheless Annie felt that she had been remiss in her duties; she ought to have done her sweeping before the children were up and she was anxious to make amends. She had a happy knack of furnishing the children with employment and amusement by turns and she left them contented on the kitchen porch while she seized broom and dust-pan to go to work.

Beginning at the front door, she swept the wide hall through which she had come yesterday, and saw now what she had not noticed then—two large, dark, handsome doors opposite to the plain, low door by which she had entered the room. There was something weird and gloomy about this interdicted portion of the house, though; and she was glad when she had reached the door at the end of the hall, which she might open and see daylight and sunshine again, she hoped. She was not disappointed; but so thoroughly startled that she dropped broom and dust-pan with a crash and a clatter, and

leaned forward with clasped hands over the balustrade running around the gallery or veranda on which the door opened. She was looking straight before her into a realm of enchantment—a scene from fairyland, unexpected as it was bewildering.

A second look convinced her that it was a spacious green-house into which she was looking, a little distance off, but so arranged, its tall, wide doors thrown back, that the eye looked across billows of brilliant-hued flowers into a sea of green. As if drawn by a magnet she tip-toed down the steps, across a pavement of great, square flags, and into the portal of the conservatory, utterly oblivious to the fact that the pavement was bounded, on her right, by the continuation of the gallery, on which gave the door of the dining-room, of Mr. Winter's room and a window of the kitchen. On her left the flagged walk was bordered by a strip of velvety lawn, on the other side of which could be seen the driveway. Between the lawn and the conservatory stood an airy, graceful structure, half garden-pavilion, half office room; and the portico in front was built to extend out far enough to secure shade in summer and shelter in rainy weather for the space in front of the office.

But Annie saw nothing of these details; her hungry eyes feasted once more. Then all of grace and beauty had not fled from the life whose threads she had yesterday severed so determinedly from the past. The charm of what she saw before her would reconcile her to her lot as nothing else could. A great wave of thankfulness surged through her heart as she stood spellbound a moment, before venturing farther into the glass-house. The stately bells of the gloximas seemed to nod her a

welcome; the royal coloring of the fuchias, the soft pink of the begonias, the intense dark blue of the salvia patens hovering, like a bird of rich plumage, above the rest of the flowers—all were as heaven-sent gifts to her. A stephanotis, climbing along the glass roof, and filling all the air with its heavy perfume, intertwined cordially with the scarlet passi flora; but its fairer, more delicate sister, robed in purest white, met the rare waxy blossoms of the Hoya carnosa in its journey upward from the earth. In the center of the rotunda beyond, and in front of the wall of ferns, which formed a half circle, rose a clump of rocks overgrown with cactus, bearing flowers of the most fantastic shapes and the most glowing hues, and the silver shower thrown by the fountain, seemed to borrow the colors of these tropic blooms as the sun fell through the glass dome and lighted up the spray.

Little did she heed that what she gazed upon had consumed enormous sums of money in its construction and gathering together. For it was the pride of John Winters to exhibit to the people from the older States, who came to visit his nurseries as one of the show-places of Central California, these ferns, natives of the cool, shady canyons in the mountain-chain within view of his gardens, as also the collection of the great, ugly, ungainly cacti with their wonderfully brilliant flowers—which had been gathered up from the dry, arid desertland of Southern California.

How long she had been there she never knew; but she tore herself away at last and tiptoed back, daring to look neither to the right nor the left. Snatching up broom and dust-pan, she continued her labor, happily ignorant that two pair of eyes had watched her—Bridget from the

kitchen window and Mr. Winters from his office. The former with evident satisfaction, as if this act of the new girl confirmed a theory in regard to her; the latter with a certain degree of professional pride, sated, however, with constant gratification. Bridget drew her head back from the window, and her employer left his office by a door that led directly into the grounds.

With a brighter look in her eyes than had shone there for many a long day, Annie continued to shake rugs and dust woodwork, as though her life depended on this task. Suddenly she heard wheels crumpling on the gravel in the drive-way, and her first impulse was to fly upstairs and "peek" through the window in her room. But the vehicle was already abreast of her, and she felt no fear either of the old white horse or the two women it was drawing along in an equally ancient buggy. The "whip" proved to be an old lady with sharp nose and piercing eyes; and her passenger a raw-boned female with orange hair and green eyes looking daggers at each other. Before the old lady could alight, Bridget was on the ground, with Cobby on her arm. Bobby held fast by her good right hand; Trixy kept well behind her.

"I've brought the new girl, Bridget," said the old lady affably, with a motion toward the other occupant of the buggy.

A large-sized wink from Bridget's eye had summoned Annie close to her, and she now drew Cobby to her, saying in her most decided manner as she did so:

"This is our new girl, thank you, Mrs. Ault."

"Yes," continued Bridget, "she came here yesterday. Here, Annie, take the children in the garden; Paul will show you the new roses. Trixy, you point out the way."

She had flung an old hat after her, much as she had flung Cobby into her arms, and with a "shoo-ing" wave of the arms she directed the older children to go with her.

Annie, her heart beating in her throat, heard only a contemptuous "Ah!" after the expressive "Oh!" and dreading, she hardly knew what, she started off, piloted by Trixy as usual.

Paul was not far off, and threw down his spade at once.

"Did your aunt come?" he asked Trixy, to which this precise young lady replied:

"She's tum; she's my dandaunt." And seeing her father in a distant field, where a number of men were digging up trees and packing them for transportation, she was about to raise her voice and call him, when Paul quickly laid his broad paw over her face, warning her to "stop her noise, Bridget said so." That settled it, and the young lady followed silently where Paul led the way.

This was only a short distance, in fact it was the outward curve of the glass wall of the rotunda, which was followed in the graceful sweep by a broad border of roses. Roses of every shade and tint from the glowing scarlet of the Jacqueminot, the velvet of the Dusky Creole, to the satin sheen of the pink La France and the waxen white of the Lamarque. The fawn and crimson of the Safrano; the deep coppery color of the Richardson; the more delicate yellow tints of the Salfatera—all were there, together with innumerable roses of whose names she had never heard, of whose beauty she had never dreamed.

"How is it possible," she asked more of herself than of her companion, "It is barely the beginning of spring—and all these roses in full bloom."

"That don't make any difference in California," Paul explained, with the nonchalantly proud air of one who held a controlling interest in California climate, "the roses always bloom with us."

And Annie, grateful for all the kindness that had come to her so unexpectedly, wondered if the roses would ever bloom in her life again.

But Paul had had "one ear on the lookout" as Bridget would have said, for the female voices that rose and fell in what seemed quite a lively controversy, held on the flag-pavement in front of the long gallery. That Mrs. Ault did not cross this gallery to enter the house, Paul felt pretty sure; so when the voices became hushed he led Annie quietly back to the house.

Bridget looked ready to explode with wrath as she sat vigorously fanning herself with the check apron on the veranda steps.

"O'll tache the ould beldame, bedad, comin' 'round here to boss me. Wants me to remimber that Oi'm only Bridget, the cook; an' shure it's proud Oi am av bein' that same. 'Mistook that one for Marie Jones,' siz she." Bridget puckered up her generous mouth as if she meant to whistle, in her effort to imitate the high, thin voice of Mrs. Ault. "'She's got red hair,' siz Oi. 'Oh! but Maria Jones' eyes are crossed,' siz she. "'Well, now,' sez Oi, 'there's no positive necessity for a gerrul to be cross-eyed that lives in this place.'" And as her remarks had been addressed to her as much as to Paul, Annie

agreed cordially that red hair was bad enough without the addition of a squint in the eye.

Though Bridget's rough plumage was smoothed out again, she did not forget to mention the incident to Mr. Winters when he came in; and Annie could not help but notice the gloomy look on his face. Annie, however, did not find one spare moment to speculate on the cause of the gloom and trouble written on her employer's face, nor on any other problem.

Whenever Cobby was asleep or "good," she devoted herself to the task of making into garments for the children the material which Bridget had bought in town that day, in anticipation of the new girl's coming. Very diligent and conscientious was Annie, and more thankful to Bridget, under Providence, than she dared tell, for this place she had found. Early and late she worked, spending the hours after the children had been put to bed, in the kitchen with Bridget and Paul, sewing or embroidering, cheerful always and joining heartily in the laugh which Bridget knew so well to turn on Paul. But Paul bore no ill will toward her; on the contrary, when Annie had finished that famous reticule he was the first to go into ecstacies over it. When he had bought the yellow silk to embroider the wheat ears with, he had seen some red silk the exact shade of the wild poppies that grew together with the blue cornflowers in the wheat fields in his Fatherland, and Annie had designed and embroidered these too, to please him. The young Dutchman's eyes sparkled and his cheeks glowed while contemplating the work when it was finished.

"Ach Gott! I think I hear the lark flying up from the corn field now"—and while he spoke he heard the joyous trill of the bird at his elbows.

Annie's eyes kindled for a moment, and she was happy again, and joyous as the trill she sent aloft, but even as Bridget and the boy regarded and applauded her, the light died out of her eyes and a hopeless, grieved look crept back into them again.

Bridget, however, had carried her new reticule and bonnet to church once once, before Cobby began to complain and grow weaker day by day, without showing any symptom of sickness that could be laid hold of and battled against. He had no pain, no ache, but he clung to Annie day and night, and fell back into his distressful way of wailing if ever she was out of his slight. The physician from the neighboring burg, who had known Cobby from the hour of his birth, was notified, and spent much time and thought on his little patient's case, and at last hunted up Mr. Winters one day in his office by the greenhouse.

"My visits will do no good here," he declared. "The child is ailing, yes, but he is not ill. You know," he continued slowly, as if treading on delicate ground, "that Cobby's case is a little peculiar, and that, besides, he has not from the hour of his birth really had the care and attention needed—handicapped as the poor fellow came into the world. He seems to feel—and the instincts of a child are unerring—that he has found someone to love him and nurse him, and he is going to exact the care now that he has hitherto always lacked. The young person you have on the place here is patient and capable, and little Cobby sticks to her like a leech. If she pulls him

through he will be stronger than before. In case any alarming symptoms should develop you had better let me know; otherwise your son is in good hands."

With a sigh of relief the father arose, together with the Doctor, promising himself to say a word of thanks to the young person in charge of the child.

So far he had not taken notice whether this person was young or old; he loved his children dearly; but, man-like, he had so enjoyed this season of exemption from family cares that he had been entirely satisfied with Bridget's assurance of their well-being under the new girl's care.

The sun's rays fell aslant as he parted with Dr. Bently at the gate, and slowly retraced his steps to the house. The doors were all open, but a portiere hung across the sitting-room, and he entered with noiseless step for fear of rousing the patient whom the Doctor had left asleep. Standing in the shadow of the heavy curtain, his gaze rested for a moment on the figure coming toward his part of the room, for the face of the woman was turned toward the window through which broad views of the foothills of the Coast Range were seen. The man caught his breath. Was that their new red-headed girl? The hair was brown, he decided first;—no—it was auburn there was no denying that; but it had a shimmer of gold where the sun kissed it as she slowly passed the window. The hair had been hurriedly twisted into a tight knot, but the strands escaping here and there, lay in curls on neck and bosom. The face was colorless save for the lips; and under the dark brows and lashes it was natural to look for the brown orbs of red-haired people, but instead he recognized eyes of the deepest violet blue, with

an expression in them of one who has been grieved and wounded past reconciliation or forgiveness.

To his honor we will acknowledge that Mr. Winters felt like a sneak-thief while making these observations, for the girl did not at once discover him; her eyes were still dazzled from the bright light falling in through the window. So our hero advanced boldly, as if he would have relieved her of the burden in her arms. But little Cobby, his head resting on her shoulder, only tightened the hold which his thin, long arms had about her neck, wailing out his protest against his father's outstretched hands.

"Is he not becoming too much of a burden for you?" he inquired.

"No," she replied, "Cobby is very good; I do not always walk around with him, I sit by the window a good deal of the time."

"But he has been sick now for so long," he urged; "are you not getting tired and worn out? Who would take care of the children if you too became ill?"

There was gratification in the half smile that passed over her face.

"There is no danger," she assured him. "Bridget has dispensed me from all other work; and Cobby and I sleep late into the morning."

But Cobby felt his right being interfered with, and with a little fretful cry he urged his nurse on. The father stood by the window undecided. He had come with the

intention of expressing his satisfaction and a vague idea of promising their new girl an increase of wages for her unflagging devotion to the sick child. But how could he? So, like a wise man, he said nothing, and, like a gentleman, he bowed to Annie as he withdrew; and then hunted up Bridget.

"Do we pay that—that girl wages enough?" he inquired of Bridget.

"Dade and it's not the high wages she's after," said Bridget, "it's a home she's wanting—don't you see!"

"Oh! she told you—did she?" her employer asked her with more interest than he thought he felt.

"Not a bit of it," replied Bridget with fine contempt for a man's blindness. "Haven't ye eyes to see?" She pronounced it "oyes" but her master always understood her; so it could not have been that that made him look so puzzled for a moment. But Bridget turned to the stove to baste the meat, and Mr. Winters felt that this was equal to turning him out, so he went.

CHAPTER V.

When Cobby had recovered so far that Annie could resume her ordinary duties about the house, Bridget by some queer reasoning of her own felt that she had earned a holiday, and she planned "a whole day off," to be spent with some friends at Centreton, the next village.

In the course of preparations Bridget said: "There, Annie, me gerrul, but this ridicule is too foine to be packin' a bit o' cake into me friend's children."

And Annie, with the air of Archimedes proposing to lift the earth out of its orbit if any one would furnish a convenient standing-place outside, made answer: "Give me the cloth, and I'll make you another reticule."

Again Bridget dived down among the cups and plates for the mysterious bunch of keys which seemed to unlock the still more mysterious other side of the house. A bundle of silk patches was brought up as trophy this time, and a bunch of artificial flowers which Annie pronounced too fine for the hat which Bridget wanted them to grace. A compromise was made to the effect that Annie trim the old hat with silk to match the reticule, the fine flowers to go on another new bonnet which Bridget was to buy during her visit to town.

Still, it must be admitted that although "bunnits" and "ridicules" constituted the Irishwoman's chief pleasures in life, her ruling passion was to bestow patronage. And having patronized Paul into general favor she now felt it her duty to patronize Annie.

"I'll be giving the gerrul a chance tomorrow," she informed Mr. Winters on the eve of the day off, "to show what she can do. I'll be after having Paul take me to town in the morning, and in the evening I'll find some one to ride back with me as far as the Corners, and from there I can just walk home. I'm wanting a whole day off, and I'll be getting it that way."

And a glorious sight was Bridget in the morning, with new hand-bag stuffed with cake, new-trimmed hat and ulster made smart by Annie's deft fingers.

"Now, me gerrul, I'm giving you a chance; let's see what you're made of," she said as she climbed into the cart with Paul. "Do everything just as I told ye and ye'll have no trouble."

But she could not do just as she had been told to, and she did have trouble. The day was so perfect, the air so clear, the sun so bright, that everybody with his wife and daughter, owning a ranch within a radius of twenty miles, seemed to have decided that this was just the time to visit the great Nursery, to select trees for this year's planting, or to contract for the next year's supply. Not only that Mr. Winters was kept from a trip that he had to make into the neighborhood, but Paul too, upon his return was immediately set to work to make up the huge bouquets which he so hated to see the women carry off out of the conservatory. And these same women invaded the house and the kitchen, though Mr. Winters had anticipated their desire for water to drink and chairs to rest in, on the lawn by the green house. It became embarrassing to Annie; she was only the hired girl and could not take it upon herself to ask them into the house;

and her morning's work lay untouched while answering questions and pointing out directions.

When the last wagon-load of visitors vanished through the tall gateway, Annie lifted little Cobby from the baby carriage where he had been "good" all morning, kissed him, fed him and laid him back again before beginning preparations for a hasty lunch to set before Mr. Winters and Paul. It was well for Annie that the ranch hands and gardeners were boarded at the house of the foreman, Mr. Carter. Trixy, helpful and housewifely, did a thousand little things with the best of intentions, while Bobby sat through it all, unmoved and untouched at his little table, which had been placed for the summer on the flag-pavement close to the glass front of his father's office. As usual the inmates of Noah's Ark were drawn up in line before him and if their ranks were less compact now, one hardly noticed the deficiency—the table was so well covered with orange-husks, raisin-stems and nut-shells. He had devoted himself so manfully to the stowing away of "California's choicest products," that it was doubtful whether he had breath enough left to call for more. Still, as a matter of form his father brought him to the table with him, where he astonished them all by the quantities of solid food he packed on top of the tid-bits he had laid in for a foundation.

After lunch, the dishes washed and replaced where Bridget liked them, alone with the children, Annie felt justified in retiring to her room after seating Cobby in his little chair on the lawn, where Trixy was busy gathering flowers for the "little begger's" delectation. She felt justified, too, in owning to a slight, a very slight headache, and in loosening the heavy coils of her bur-

densome hair. With all her senses on the alert to catch the first indication of a change in the calm atmosphere now surrounding Trixy and her charge she began to brush the shining, wavy mass of hair that enveloped her like a mantle, feeling the pain grow less as soon as her head was relieved from the tightly twisted roll into which she had persistently squeezed her hair ever since she had been in her new home.

Suddenly and without warning Cobby's cries of distress and fright broke on her ears, and flinging the brush aside she flew to the child's rescue, crying as she ran.

"Trixy, Trixy! Don't hurt Cobby—poor little Cobby—" and catching him to her, his long, thin arms stretched out beseechingly, were soon clinging around her neck, and she soothed him into quiet calling him "Annie's own little Cobby," and brushing away the ugly beetle which his sister had evidently pressed upon him, to his great terror.

"Naughty Trixy!" she exclaimed, "how can you frighten your little brother so. Come now and carry this horrid bug away from here; clear away from the grass-plot, throw it into the road there." She turned to see that the order was carried out and stood face to face with Mr. Winters.

She grew hot, and her eyes darkened with an inexplicable feeling of anger against him.

"I—I beg your pardon—but I thought you were away, or—or I should not—should not—." She had put the child gently back into its chair, and hastily imprisoning her flowing hair with her hands, she turned to flee, when the child's cries brought her back, with a fresh determination written on her face. About to pick him up out

of his chair to carry him with her, Mr. Winters' calm voice suddenly put an end to her endeavors.

"Leave him where he is, Annie," he said kindly, "and never mind your hair. No, I was not away," he continued, "I was detained just as I was ready to start; so I remained. But as to your hair"—he smiled as he went on pleasantly, "there is no apology needed. My little girl is evidently much pleased with it, to judge from the way she is making free with it."

Annie murmured something about having had a headache, to which he replied, "That is not surprising, from the way you twist your hair up into that ugly wad you make of it."

Annie took no notice of his answer; perhaps because Trixy had succeeded in disentangling two strands of her hair, which she held in her hands like lines, shaking and pulling them, clucking with her tongue and calling out:

"Ge-up, So'l-Top; get up here, So'l-Top!"

"My daughter is taking great liberties with your 'flowing locks,'" laughed Mr. Winters, "she must have driven this 'unruly steed' before."

And Annie explained that always, at some time during the course of the day, she gave way to her desire to let her hair hang loose, if for ever so short a period; and as she generally had the children in her room with her, Trixy had gotten a habit of playing horse with her—which harmed no one, and which they both enjoyed.

"What does she call her horse?" Mr. Winters inquired. "No doubt you suggested a name to her."

"Yes; an appropriate one: Sorrel Top. But she cannot pronounce it plainly as yet."

"Sorrel Top!" he repeated much amused: "You do not seem to be proud of the color of your hair."

"No;" a humorous smile flitted over her face. "My stepmother had three black-haired daughters, and I was impressed with the misfortune of possessing 'a shock of red hair' quite early in life." There was a ring of bitterness in her voice as she ended, and the old grieved look crept back into her eyes again.

Trixy had grown tired of driving a steed that would not "gee-up," and to poor Cobby's horror had picked up the beetle from the dust and had once more laid it in his lap. Together with the little beggar's outcry, there sounded a smart slap on Trixy's hand, which this young lady accepted with the utmost composure. Again Mr. Winters laughed, and Annie for a second was covered with confusion, then she said stoutly.

"I am sorry if you disapprove of it, but it makes my blood boil to have the helpless child frightened out of its wits."

"You did quite right, Annie," he answered; "but Trixy had some slight excuse for picking up everything in the shape of bugs and beetles that she meets. I think you will find some where among her belongings, a butterfly-net of the most approved pattern, and moreover you need not be surprised if she should some day bring in a snake or two for your inspection and acceptance. You see; while my uncle, the old Herr Jakob Auf der Weise, was visiting us, there was nothing that so delighted him as the knack she had for finding and capturing bugs and beetles for his collections and the praise and pettings she got from him have kindled an unquenchable ardor in her breast for the pursuit of her entomological studies under

difficulties. For it is not the first time that Trixy has had her fingers slapped for the same offense."

"A martyr in the cause of science at her early age? She should be encouraged really; and I will arrange a little case for her specimens, if she will only not molest Cobby with her horrid catches," Annie promised readily.

"It is mistaken kindness on her part, I am sure; but none of us mortals are free from erring in our love." If there had been bitterness in Annie's tones awhile ago when she spake of her red hair; the sadness that sounded in the words of the tall, strong man was no less profound. Involuntarily she raised her eyes to the face of her employer—hardly a handsome face, but with energy and self-respect written on it though not devoid of a softer expression.

Perhaps the desire to dispel the gloom on his face prompted her to say:

"The gentleman you mentioned must be the same whom Bridget speaks of as old Rev. Afterwe's; and she feels herself half-German, I think, when she pronounces the name."

Mr. Winters laughed heartily; but Annie, suddenly recollecting herself, took Cobby in her arms and in embarrassment badly concealed she declared that Bridget had bidden her have the fire lighted and the oven heated for her baking, by the time she got home.

"And I am paid such very good wages," she continued, "that I am anxious to give satisfaction so as to keep my place."

He looked up in bewilderment a moment then the wrinkle deepened between his brows and he said coldly:

"By all means girl," and turning on his heel he re-entered his office.

When Bridget returned, the fire was lighted and the oven hot; but she seemed in no hurry to make use of either. As everything in this house seemed incongruous, it was not surprising that Mr. Winters should come into the kitchen for the mail-matter which Bridget was supposed to have brought. Indeed, in many matters Bridget did the ordering and Mr. Winters the obeying; and as far as Annie could see, he never lost by either in respect or comfort. If, for instance, Bridget decided that there was no time to set the table for the master and "the childers" in the dining room, this "master" was simply told to come into the kitchen, where the table was laid for the master, his man-servant, and his maid-servants, as also for his children.

"He's the easiest man to do for that you ever saw, the master is," Bridget had confided to Annie some time ago. "He never grumbles; and he do be satisfied with anything I set before him."

As a general thing Bridget spoke of him as Mr. Winters; though sometimes she forgot her American independence so far as to call him "the master." Paul, however, since he could not address him as the "gnadige Herr," referred to him always as "the boss."

On this particular evening then, Mr. Winters himself proposed that they all take supper in the kitchen, to which Bridget agreed instantly, though the proposition was made before she had her bonnet removed or her newest hand-bag in safety from the meddling fingers of the chil-

dren. There was an ominous flush on Bridget's face, and a general air of "spoiling for a fight" about her, which Annie could not understand and which filled her with great apprehensions—to be increased directly, to positive fear. Taking up the papers which Bridget had brought, Mr. Winters asked from sheer force of habit evidently.

"No letters, Bridget?" in an absent way.

"Sorry a letter, sir?" replied Bridget, punctiliously polite in her own estimation. These words, however quietly spoken, were like the dam that breaks suddenly; and the deluge following the break could not have been more angry and sweeping than the long repressed wrath of Bridget.

"No sor, no letters, sor," she went on, "but ye don't seem half so much put out about it as that meddlin' ould wig-stock in the postoffice whin I axed her for the mail. 'No letter,' sez she, with her pryin' ould eyes a squintin' at me new bunnet, 'only papers today. You people at the Nursery don't get many letters these days; what's the matter with yez." 'Well, mum,' sez I, quite polite and respectful like, 'we have so much to do at the Nursery mindin' our own business that we don't get toime to write letters—d'ye see?' 'That's hard, particularly for you,' sez she, a smiling through them false teeth of hers. 'But,' sez she, 'you haven't inquired for letters for that new hired girl of yours,' sez she, 'and I don't know what her name is.' 'No, nor Oi;' sez Oi; (Bridget was getting more excited.) 'She don't seem to write any letters either,' sez she. 'Perhaps she can't read or write any more than meself,' sez Oi. 'Good afternoon to ye,' sez Oi, and walked off and left her, and she dyin' to hear more."

A dizzy terror took possession of Annie. Then the postoffice people knew of her and had possession of her! The police had perhaps been notified already and the officers would come and drag her off. He had always told her that the law was on his side; he could have her put into prison perhaps, if he succeeded in capturing her. Good God! What was she to do? Run away again, now that darkness was setting in! Where would she go? She had felt secure here; or at least she had been so occupied that she had been able to thrust back all troublesome thoughts of her past life, and she had made no provision against possible detection or for flight. And what would Bridget say if a policeman were to come up suddenly put his hand on her shoulder and say "You are my prisoner!" She started up at the thought, and Cobby opened wide his dark eyes to look inquiringly into her face. They were the eyes of his father—her employer—and oh! what would he say? It was evident they already looked upon her as baggage to be carted off to the nearest police station when the prison van should come for her; for in all their conversation about her, they had not once taken notice of her.

She had not even heard all they said, for Mr. Winters had left the room unobserved by her. And now the door opened again; were they coming for her already? No; it was only Paul and he went up to Bridget with a grin spread all over his broad Dutch face and asked——

"So Mrs. Ault was mad—was she? The olle Hexe! It was only because you hired Annie without asking her permission—" A sound between a sigh and a laugh interrupted his speech; and both he and Bridget turned to

where Annie was seated with Cobby in her lap—her face in a blaze, but trembling in every limb.

"Why, Annie," exclamed Bridget, "Are you sick? I had quite overlooked you, I was that mad at the meddlesome old thing. Don't you be afraid of her, gerrul, while I'm around," she continued after a momentary pause, surprised at Annie's silence.

Poor Annie could not speak, however, for fear of going into a fit of crying. She was only a woman; and the relief of finding that it was Trixy's "dand-aunt" who had incensed Bridget by her meddling, was so great that she could hardly keep from falling around the neck of the honest Irish woman.

She put Cobby to bed, and coming back more collected, the three spent the evening together again in content and quiet happiness.

CHAPTER VI.

Through all these weeks the process of straightening up the house, which Bridget had laid such stress on, had not progressed very rapidly. And since Cobby had now quite recovered and the weather was delightful, Paul agreed to take the three children with him to a distant part of the ranch where he was to inspect a young plantation of seedling grapes—thus giving the two women time to go to work on the sitting-room together. Packing Cobby carefully into the baby carriage, Annie next helped to mount Bobby on Paul's shoulders where he put his short legs around the young German's neck and made himself still more secure by digging his fat fists into his straw-colored hair. Thus they marched off, Trixy bringing up the rear with her butterfly net on her shoulder and a little tin bucket to put horned toads in, or any other "varmint" she might capture. Then the women went indoors, bustling and busy both of them, with the firm determination to put in a day at hard labor.

To this day the clothing and wearing apparel had not all been removed from the different articles of furniture; but now Annie was rapidly disposing of the articles under Bridget's direction. At last the piano was cleared entirely of its burden of hats, shoes, umbrellas and children's toys, and Annie, after carefully dusting the outside, raised the cover and yielded to the temptation of touching the keys.

"Oh! Bridget," she cried beseechingly, "may I? Please."

Bridget, closely inspecting a bundle of papers she could not read, turned at this touching appeal.

"May you what? Play the piano? Shure ye may if ye can."

And Annie, running her fingers over the keys, found that the instrument though a little out of tune, had a magnificent tone; and Bridget soon stood beside her, dust-cloth in hand, and mouth and eyes wide open in astonishment.

"Why, Annie gerrul—who would have thought it! Can you sing, too?"

"Yes," said Annie without hesitation; and she intoned one of the Aves that she felt sure Bridget must have heard in church. She was not mistaken, for she touched her on the shoulder, directly saying, breathlessly:

"Annie—you're a Catholic?"

To which the girl replied, "No, Bridget; but I have both played and sung in your church, at high mass and at vespers."

Bridget looked at her searchingly a moment; then she said, "You ought to be one. But go on with your music."

Which she did to such good purpose that while she forgot herself in the reproduction from memory of some old church music, Bridget drew her rosary from her pocket, and kneeling by the piano she became absorbed in her devotions as though she were kneeling in some corner of the church of her faith.

It is hardly necessary to say that the morning's work was not done when Paul returned with the children, but Bridget cared little for that. With an air of triumph

she told Paul that she had heard that piano played on at last, and that Annie had done the playing.

"No—" said Paul in astonishment, "can she do everything?"

"She can sing, at least. Do you know she sang so beautifully I thought I was in church," pursued Bridget.

"And didn't she begin at once to pray to all her Saints that they might pray her soul into heaven?" asked Paul of Annie.

But Bridget herself replied:

"The which, av course, is not necessary for the loikes av ye to do. Didn't Luther promise that all the Dutch should walk straight into heaven wid their wooden shoes on?"

In the afternoon when Cobby was asleep, they meant to start in again on their work. Standing by the crib to see that her pet was soundly asleep, Annie said softly—

"Do you know, Bridget, that while Cobby was so sick I used to think that his dead mother was longing for him and trying to draw him to her—"

"Annie!" Bridget interrupted her harshly with anger in her voice.

"Oh—I beg pardon—" stammered Annie. "Is she not dead? Forgive me—I had no right to ask—"

"You had a perfect right to ask the question, Annie; Cobby's mother is dead fast enough. But as for her wanting any of her children to come near her unless they were frizzled and fur-belowed as she always was herself —it sounded so foolish in ye to say it that I did not know whether to laugh or get mad."

"Bridget!" It was Annie's turn now to ejaculate her companion's name in horror, and she said nothing more.

But Bridget silently left the room to return directly, with the mysterious bunch of keys, and simply saying "Come," she led the way through the hall and stopped in front of one of the tall, fine doors. Annie's curiosity was aroused, and an involuntary exclamation of surprise passed her lips as she crossed the threshold of one of the interdicted rooms.

Tall mirrors; luxurious furniture daintily upholstered; silken hangings covered with filmy lace; carpets that deadened every foot-fall in their velvet pile; marvelously beautiful chandeliers hanging from artistically decorated ceilings; mantles and chiffoniers bright with little gems of art and objects of vertu—she could instantly conjure up a delicate fairy-like creature that flitted through these rooms and from them into that other realm of enchantment, the conservatory.

And a delicate fairy-like creature she had been according to Bridget's story—"Fay Lilian" her admirers had called her—the gilded youth of San Francisco, dangling after her when she was already Mr. Winters' wife. Indeed they had only discovered her after he had lifted her out of obscurity and made her his wife. Glad enough she had been to capture John Winters, the wealthiest man in his neighborhood, when she first came to California with a widowed mother and an older sister to live with her aunt, Mrs. Ault, the postmistress at Centreton. The old house in the large nursery grounds had seemed quite grand to her then; but she soon outgrew it and cajoled her husband into buying a fine house in town. Then began a course of pleasure-hunting and dissipation unheard of in the annals of San Francisco society. Fairy feasts were arranged in which appeared the Fairy Queen

in a blaze of diamonds—and very little else, if Bridget's statements could be believed, crowds of admirers had the young married woman, while the older sister looked in vain for a match as advantageous as the younger sister had made. Trixy's birth had put an end to festivities for a brief space of time, much to the chagrin of the older sister, who upbraided Mrs. Winters for depriving her of a whole season's pleasure. As soon as possible Trixy was placed in the hands of servants and nurses, and again the mad chase began—not after pleasure alone, but a husband for "Con." Mr. Winters, in the meantime, had awakened to the fact that he too was only a husband, a creature whose worth was weighed by the "heft" of his purse.

At this period Bridget had first come into the Winters household, as a loan from his sister, Mrs. Higginson, whose cook and faithful handmaiden she had been ever since she came to California. Then Bobby arrived, and again Miss Constancia was furious at her sister's inconsiderateness. But after a brief period the old life was taken up again, in spite of Mr. Winters' earnest protest and his assertion that he was on the verge of bankruptcy through his wife's insane extravagance. As a matter of fact it was his sister who came to his aid financially in time to prevent his creditors from forcing him to assign. But she did it under the condition that he take his wife and family back to the home at the Nursery across the bay; and he then built this addition to the old house and brought part of the furnishing of the city house here. The house in the city was sold, though his petite wife tore her yellow-dyed short hair and writhed on the

floor in a paroxysm of rage and hysterics, when she learned the fact.

She had been moved to this place not a day too soon, however, for Cobby was born, to the surprise of his own father, even; for no one had known of her condition, and the poor little mite of humanity was made to suffer for his mother's persistent effort to escape the cares and inconveniences of maternity. But she paid the penalty with her life.

Her mother, sister and aunt spoke in no low tones of the tyranny that had made the poor martyr's life a burden, and the brutality that had caused her death. Only once had the mother come to the house since then. She wanted the piano, which Lily had promised to Constancia in case of her death. And surely, she argued, he could have no use for it, as its tones could only remind him of joys forever fled from his life; while Constancia had use for the piano. John Winters had replied that no painful memories could be brought back to him by the sound of the piano, as his wife had never touched the keys for him; and that Constancia could not play.

Not long afterwards Constancia called. She wanted her sister's diamonds; she had been promised them in case of her death. John Winters told her that the diamonds were no longer in his possession; he had sold them to pay the poor women who had labored with the needle to deck his wife in finery for which he thought he had paid before she wore it. Neither mother or sister had ever come again; but Mrs. Ault had kept a general supervision—"looked after the motherless children, left helpless in the hands of an ignorant Irish woman, who assumed all the airs of the mistress of the house." Which

meant, in plain English, that it was just as well to keep an eye on the children, as the father was known to be still wealthy.

When the two women left the rooms to their old solitude, and Annie stepped out on the gallery again from where she had seen the conservatory that first moment after coming here, many thoughts were crowded through her brain. She understood now the deep fold between his eyes, that gave the gloomy look to her employer's face.

Sometimes, however, a gentle look would come into his face; as for instance just now, when he was stroking his full, brown beard with a hand well shaped but almost as brown. He was watching his little daughter as she approached Annie, carrying an envelope, tray-fashioned, on which something was laid that she presented with a happy smile to her beloved Annie.

"It is a horned toad, a very small one, Annie; don't get frightened at it, for it is perfectly harmless in spite of its name, which is Moloch Horrodus in Natural History. Trixy found it this morning, and is dying to have you admire it."

Annie stepped forward laughing, and with the determination to pick up and admire the creature even though it were a rattlesnake. But instead of this she gave a low cry of terror, growing pale as death and staggering up to the nearest pillar for support.

Mr. Winters came hurriedly out of his office—he had spoken to her through the open door—and looked in amazement into her colorless face.

"Poor Annie—I am sorry," he said. "I had no idea that the thing would frighten you so."

Annie struggled desperately to control herself. "I beg your pardon, sir," she said falteringly, "a working girl like myself should be ashamed of herself for growing faint at sight of a toad; it is only because—because I had never seen one like it before.

The fold between Mr. Winters' brow grew deeper. "Come, come, Annie," he said, "why do you keep up that farce of 'a working girl' with me?"

"Then you know who I am?" Her face had flushed painfully, and her hands trembled as she laid them on her beating heart.

"No," he answered more sternly than he had spoken yet, "I do not. You have a secret to keep; keep it. I shall not pry into it, but do not attempt to deceive me by pretending to be what you are not;" and he walked past her into the house.

Trixy stood expectant; was she to be slapped or petted? Making sure that her employer had left the courtyard, Annie called Trixy to her, and under pretence of helping her look for the baby-toad, which had gone perdu in the interval, she secured the envelope on which the horned toad had been presented to her.

CHAPTER VII.

Was it only fancy or did her employer really watch her more closely after this. As for herself she neither gave him nor Bridget any grounds for complaint, but the old sense of security had left her, and she always dreaded to see Paul go for the mail. While listening to Bridget's story that day, the longing had taken possession of her to go to him and lay her hand only once on the hand of her employer and assure him that she would die, if it were necessary, to make amends for the grief and the heart-ache that one of her sex had caused him, a good, true man, she felt, if ever one lived. How she blushed now to think he saw in her only an adventuress, without name, without standing or character. And still they were all so kind to her, and the children clung to her with such affection that even Bobby had laid aside the surly, blase indifference with which he had been wont to regard everything that was not connected with Noah's Ark, ginger-snaps and sugar cookies.

Spring had grown into summer; humming birds with plumage of liquid amethyst and amber, ruby and emerald, fluttered and buzzed in and out of the conservatory. The lark rose up from the green fields in the early dew, the robin, the linnet and the little blue finch piped and twittered and trilled all the day long; and sometimes early, sometimes late, the mocking bird flew across from its haunts in the foothills to feast on the worms and grubs that the men working in the nursery grounds unearthed with their spades. As the season moved on

Annie often gazed across the valley into those same foothills, where the sun had left its hot kisses on the earth till it grew parched and brown from their ardor; but the fields and farms lying as if sown broadcast, and the clumps and groves of trees clothed in undying green, made a very attractive picture. All through the summer a langorous, dreamy atmosphere hung over these hills, softening the hard outlines of the features which the Californian stamps on the face of nature when he attempts to cultivate it as a ranch.

On the other side of the valley rose a more majestic mountain-chain, its giant redwoods visible at this distance only as dark masses clothing its rugged sides, where blue shadows gathered in deep canyons never lighted by the sun. Now she had learned to love the country around her—and the people, too. Yes, she knew it; it would break her heart to be thrust out of what seemed almost an earthly paradise to her, so free from the strife, the bitterness, the humiliations of her past life. How long would it last, she asked herself every morning anew.

And one day—had it come now—the time that she felt must come sooner or later? She noticed that Mr. Winters, though kinder to her since the day he told her to keep her secret, than ever before, had grown restless and gloomy by turns. He had several interviews with Bridget, who had evidently his full confidence as he had her sympathy, for she declared to Annie after these interviews, that the master was the best man in the world, and that no man's kindness had been more abused and taken advantage of; that he was about to lose thousands

and thousands because he had had faith in a man who had had faith in a woman.

And was he again to suffer through the fault and wrong-doing of a woman, Annie asked herself. But she was not left much longer in suspense; for one day, when Bridget had gone over to Centreton again, and Cobby was lying asleep, Trixy came to say that papa wanted to speak to Annie. With a great throb at her heart she prepared herself for the worst, never dreaming that the man who had sent for her was preparing himself for the worst, too. Stroking his beard, as he did when he was excited or agitated, he paced his office, pausing now and then to mutter to himself, "Let this be the test; this shall be the test."

Had her sight been clear when she entered the office, she might have been startled at what she could have read in his eyes, which had anything rather than a forbidding expression in them.

"Annie," he began kindly, "I must speak to you on a subject that is painful to me—"

Her head swam; should she cut the matter short, turn around and walk out of the house before he could send her?

"I have become financially embarrassed"—this was music to her ears—"and I fear I can no longer afford to pay wages to two—"

"But I want no wages!" interrupted Annie eagerly—of which Mr. Winters made a note, mentally, remembering the day when she had pretended she was anxious not to lose her place, because she was getting such good wages.

"You have been so good to my children, they love you so dearly—"

"Oh! do not separate us," she pleaded; "I will work early and late; I feel now that I have not done half enough and can do a great deal more—"

"Stop, my girl," he interrupted her, "I feel that you have a right to my confidence in this matter before deciding on your course, and I will explain. In my old home in the East, I had a friend, younger than myself, the son of a man greatly beloved by my father. The boy was handsome, but effeminate and delicate; and when his father found that he was dissipating at college, he took him back home. This break in his career, as the boy called it, he never forgave his father for; and when in course of time he seemed unwilling or unable to settle down to any calling or pursuit, he always blamed his father for it."

"I have been long away from the old home," Mr. Winters continued, passing his hand over his face, as if to clear away the mist of many years, "my sister and I have long lived in California, and it is but seldom we hear from there. The friend of whom I speak had also quit our quiet old New England town; his father's fortune was soon spent, but I heard later that he had married, out West somewhere, a young lady of independent wealth. He was talented in various ways; had rare abilities as an artist, was fond of music and understood it; so that I was not greatly surprised when he wrote me, some time ago, that he had been to Europe to engage the requisite talent and proposed to come to California and put on the stage at San Francisco a number of operas in a manner that would ensure an artistic as well

as financial success. But he needed money—a great deal of money—which he could readily procure if he could get the names of two or three well-known Californians on the bonds that were required of him. He had allowed his heart to run away with his head, he said; he had married a poor girl, but she had a remarkably fine voice and some histrionic talent.

"I could not well refuse his request, and fearing no falsehood I could foresee no danger. Several months ago I was startled by a communication from him in regard to this wife of his. After having spent the last of his fortune upon this woman whom he had taken to Europe to cultivate her voice; and after having lavished upon her, not only money, but all his heart's love and devotion she had deserted him—gone with a handsomer man—upon the very threshold of her fame, and on the eve of a great financial success. They had reached San Francisco, it appears, and after crossing the Bay together, she had turned from him, in the crowd on the wharf, and was seen entering a carriage together with a man, the carriage being driven off at mad speed as soon as the stranger had entered it. He suspects an old lover who had followed her from home. Be that as it may; the treachery and heartlessness of the woman has ruined my friend and will come very near ruining me financially; for it seems that an assignment has been made by Fulton—here is a letter—" he drew it from his pocket, laid it on the desk before him and was struck dumb when suddenly Annie approached, glanced at the letter and said unhesitatingly in a firm tone:

"That is not Harry Fulton's handwriting."

CHAPTER VIII.

For a moment he looked at her in amazement. What could she know about the friend of his youth? Was she in her right mind?

"What do you know about my friend, Harry Fulton," he asked with a strange fear at his heart. "Who are you?"

And her answer came clear and sharp: "I am that man's wife! He lies when he says that I deserted him to follow some other man. He lies when he says that I ever loved another man; he lies when he says that he married me—poor, and lavished wealth and affection on me—oh! my God—" Her voice had risen in her passion and her ire till it rang again; but the reaction came all too soon, and she would have fallen had he not supported her to a chair.

"You poor child," he said gently laying his hand on hers; but she flung it aside.

"Don't touch my hand!" she cried; "I am that man's wife, I tell you; and if he did not quite succeed in making of me the base contemptible thing he meant to, I escaped so narrowly, and felt the degradation so keenly, that I cannot bear your hand to touch me."

A new light shone in John Winters' eyes. "But you can tell me, Annie—can you not, about your trouble and your sorrow."

"Willingly," she assented, "for I have lived the life of a condemned culprit ever since I saw Harry Fulton's

handwriting on the envelope I took from Beatrice that day."

"Ah!" he said, "now I understand."

"The one circumstance that made me feel comparatively safe," she went on, "was that the letter was addressed to your name, San Francisco; and was post marked in New Orleans. It was barely possible, I thought, that you might not recognize me from the description, in spite of my red hair; for it never once occurred to me that you could know the man. The fact of its coming from New Orleans gave me some hope of his remaining there for want of funds to come back here. You know, of course, that he has become dreadfully dissipated and that fortune never smiles on him at cards."

"I feared as much," said John Winters musingly, "and for that reason this document—" pointing to the letter, "gives me some uneasiness. It is an assignment of the claim which the bond I signed gives him on me. But you, at least, are safe from him after this, poor child. A sad life he must have led you, the scamp."

"But I have escaped from oh!—from untold misery. And I thought once that I loved the man; did love him, perhaps."

"Harry was fascinating, I know," said Mr. Winters. "But where and when did you first meet with him."

"It was after the death of my father," Annie began, "he died before I was eighteen, leaving a widow, my stepmother, with three daughters. My fortune derived from my mother, but my stepmother was given charge of everything, myself included. We had hardly laid aside our mourning, before she insisted that I get married, being the oldest, and there not being money enough

to provide for us according to our standing in society. I ventured to suggest that my mother had left me enough to live on, to which she replied that my father had not left her enough to live on, and that I could not be so selfish as to live in luxury while my sisters were starving. If I married the man who was then on the carpet, I should need none of the money my mother had left me, and she might hope to exist on the interest. Marry the man I would not, but I sang at the old Cathedral in St. Louis, was paid for it, and brought the money home to show my stepmother. But she laughed at the idea that I could think to provide for myself with anything so uncertain as an engagement to sing in a church choir.

"As I was not watched closely so long as I kept myself well out of the way, I devoted the next six months to going through an apprenticeship at Madame de Faunfeder's millinery establishment, securing thereby a perfect torrent of abuse for myself and a fit of hysterics for all of our five hundred friends, who said they always knew there was something vulgar about that red-headed girl. In fact, it was all laid to my red hair; the difficulty I had in finding a suitable husband (as if I were hunting for one), the dislike which my stepmother felt for me—the coldness with which my friends turned from me."

"That beautiful Titian hair on your head, Annie?" asked Mr. Winters.

"That accursed red mane, as Harry Fulton called it—later on. When I first met him he was captivated by my beauty, my grace, my magnificent hair—in short by the figure of my bank account"—she laughed bitterly at her own joke. Then she continued, "Just how my stepmother and he arranged, I don't know; but we went to

Europe on our wedding-tour, and while there he generously proposed that my exceptional voice be cultivated, for which he paid enormous sums—out of my money. But the sums he lost at the gaming-table were still larger, and it was not long till he told me we had spent everything we had."

"We never went back to my old home; from New Orleans it seems he opened correspondence for the purpose of bringing out a play—an opera—a something in which that accursed red mane of mine, as he now called it, could be turned to some use. I was helpless, and oh! so miserable; not a soul in the wide world to turn to for advice or aid. But I was determined to elude him—"

"But Annie, with the magnificent voice you have (for I have heard you sing) why should you have so struggled against singing in concert or opera?" Mr. Winters interrupted her.

"I should not have objected to either, for I think I have a vein of an artist in my composition. But from the letters which the manager, Lockhart—"

"Richard Lockhart! There was never a greater villain than Dick Lockhart in the world; and—stop—yes, to be sure, he is the manager of some third class place of entertainment—where dramas are represented in which the personal charms of the ladies are of vastly greater importance than either voice or artistic training."

A flush mounted to the very roots of her hair as Annie went on.

"Ah! now you understand. I had fully made up my mind to die rather than go on this stage. The train that brought us out here was unfortunate from the start.

First a collision, then a two days' delay on account of snow, and lastly a break of some kind about the car-wheel, which detained the train here long enough for me to make my escape the day I first found my way to this house. While we were at the hotel, snowbound, I saw a poor woman, the mother of one of the servants, pass through the hall; and telling her daughter that we were 'show people,' and that I wanted just such a make-up, I got the dress, the shawl and the quaker-bonnet from her; paying her well for them but none too much for the good they have done me. And will you keep me in your service now, since you know who I am?" she asked humbly.

"You will be safer with me than anywhere else," he replied. "I owe you a great debt of gratitude, and ask you to forgive me for having wronged you as—that man's wife. He told so plausible a story. But come to think of it, he never once mentioned Lockhart; and the name does not appear in this document, either; which shows that his conscience was not clear."

"And is the amount you lose very great?" Annie asked in much concern. "Believe me, I shall try to atone as much as possible, if Bridget will not grow angry at my crowding her out."

"Don't fear!" he put in hastily. "She goes back willingly to my sister, and says that you are fully capable of attending to the children and the household too. And it will be a great saving, you know," he added hypocritically, "for I pay Bridget twice the wages you get." Then he wished he hadn't said it, for Annie looked surprised, and the fact was that he had no idea what wages Bridget allowed Annie.

The days were now spent principally in making up reticules for Bridget, and trimming hats and bonnets for her, not to forget the making up of a dress which Bridget declared was "the finest she iver had." Bridget on her side had her hands full trying to define to Annie and Paul both where the duties and tasks of the one ended and the others' began. But they agreed not to disagree over the distribution of labor, and Bridget set sail for San Francisco with flying colors and hat-strings streaming in the breeze. There were no tears shed, though everybody missed Bridget more than they were willing to tell, and it was well that both Annie and Paul had an extra share of work to do at present.

Letters came frequently from Mrs. Higginson with messages from Bridget; had Annie done so and so in the kitchen and in the household! And would Paul please to do this or that about the poultry-yard or in the cow-stable. It was evident that the home at the Nursery was in her thoughts constantly, and Annie made the remark to Mr. Winters that his sister must be easily pleased, for Bridget seemed to be only half with her.

"My sister," he said, "is a jewel, though set in a homely setting."

One day he told Annie that it was necessary for him to visit the city, should he send for Bridget, or was she not afraid alone, Paul sleeping in the house, of course. She gave a troubled look into his face.

"I fear it is this dreadful annoyance which I brought on you, that calls you to the city," she said sadly. "What can I ever do to repay your kindness and make you forget the trouble and loss I have caused you."

With an irresistible impulse he caught both her hands in his.

"I am more blessed than I can tell in having you with me; have you not guessed my secret, Annie, any more than I once guessed yours? I love you, darling; and if that man should dare come here to claim you, I—I believe I would strike him dead." His face blanched with the intensity of his passion.

Annie gently drew her hands from his clasp.

"But I am that man's wife," she said firmly, "and although his wife in name only, I can never be the wife of another while he lives. I cannot forget my marriage vow; for I believe what God has joined together, man cannot put asunder."

"Ah! do not deal the death blow to all my cherished hopes," he pleaded. "Is there no voice in your heart that speaks for me? Have I, blind fool, misinterpreted the softer light that has come into your eyes, the happier expression on your face?"

"Do not torture me," she begged piteously. "What should have sustained me in my hours of darkest despair if not the consciousness of wanting to do what was right before God? And should I swerve from the narrow path now, thorny though it has grown—because a broader, lighter path leading into an earthly paradise, opens before me? Do not make my duty harder; let me rest while I may from my weary pilgrimage—awhile yet."

"My house will be yours, Annie, as long as you will lend it the sunshine of your presence. Never fear, my poor child; I will struggle to still the beating of my heart. Rest with me; I will not again disturb the tranquility of your present life."

He kept his word to the letter—though he could not keep his eyes from following her hungrily as she left his presence, or crossed his path in house or garden. For her sake he tried to be happy, in her presence at least, though the gloom on his face which had once so touched her tender heart, had deepened since the day he had avowed his love for her.

One of the duties devolving upon her since Bridget's departure, was the furnishing of cakes, salads, butter, cream or anything else that the ladies of the different congregations in Centreton and the neighborhood might desire for their church entertainments. Baptist, Catholic, Methodist or Presbyterian—all were welcome; the Nursery was represented at their fairs and socials in the shape of some delicacy or another.

So when Annie saw the apparition of a tall, spare man, with benevolent expression and hands and feet very much in evidence, approaching one day, she instantly fell to speculating upon what the reverend gentleman would prefer for his church entertainment.

The garden in front of the house, through which she had passed on the day of her arrival, and the hall door by which she had entered, were very rarely used, the big bronze knocker had never resounded through the house since. There was a wide gateway opening on the road just below the garden; and as the gate was never closed in the day time, everybody came in through it, walked up the driveway and crossed the flag-pavement in front of the gallery.

It was here on the veranda that Annie was seated, shelling peas, as the figure described came around the corner of the house and crossed the flags. Cobby was

close beside her on the floor, holding in his arms a rag doll, very much as Annie was in the habit of holding him. Bobby, whose social instincts had become greatly enlarged and improved, was driving Trixy in a little go-cart laden with all the animals from the old Ark, much dilapidated; and an air of peace and contentment pervaded the atmosphere.

"Is this Mr. Winters' housekeeper, Miss?" asked the gentleman.

To which Annie promptly replied: "Mr. Winters' housekeeper is in San Francisco at present. I am the kitchen girl and my name is Annie."

"Ah! indeed!" said the gentleman as if she had given him much food for reflection. "But surely you have some other name, Mrs. or Miss——"

"Smith," she supplied the missing name, leaving her interlocutor to add Miss or Mistress according to taste. "I have been instructed by Bridget, however, as well as by Mr. Winters, to furnish you gentlemen of the church anything you might desire for your entertainments," Annie went on; "cake, salads, or whatever you may choose to name."

"Ah—very kind in Mr. Winters—an excellent man; and I hope I may succeed in the errand of mercy upon which I have come this morning. These children orphaned by the death of a most devoted, tender mother, does not their forlorn condition appeal to your womanly sympathies? If you are a Christian, would you not consider it your duty to so reconcile the members of this very worthy family that either Mrs. Ault, a most estimable lady or their aunt Constancia should become an inmate of the house and the guardian and teacher of

these children. Think of their being left, at their tender age, without a really competent guide; for she, whom you call the housekeeper, Bridget, although of suitable age, is an ignorant, uneducated woman, a Catholic; while you are—"

"Not a Catholic," Annie interupted this long harangue, but the other went on to say.

"Just so, precisely, as I was saying—while you are hardly old enough to live alone in the house of a single man. When, therefore, I beg that you may throw your influence and persuasion into the scale with ours, so that it may tip in favor of those who have a better right here than you, I am only asking you to do what will be a benefit to you, and a help in establishing your good name."

Annie's face had grown red and white by turns during this tirade; but she had been taught reverence for the cloth in her earliest youth; and after her first astonishment, she controlled herself sufficiently to ask if it were the gentleman's desire that the object of his visit should be communicated by her to her employer.

"Plead with him in this good cause, for the sake of the orphaned little ones," the clergyman urged.

To which Annie replied that it was not her place to argue with the employer upon his family affairs. She had been hired to cook for the family, to care for the children; to receive messages during her employer's absence and deliver them upon his return.

Paul, coming to the office for the order book at this juncture, hastened back to where he had left Mr. Winters in the nursery grounds; but when this gentleman reached the house, Annie's visitor had departed. Look-

ing into her troubled face he could give a pretty good guess at what had transpired; it did not need many words from Annie.

"Why will you not give me the right to protect you against insult and calumny," he asked in anger and indignation.

Later in the evening when Paul came in with the milk bucket, he said, referring to her visitor of that day,

"Ach Gott, Annie; danah Rommit aber was; something will come after this, sure."

CHAPTER IX.

What did come after this was Mr. Winters' sister, Mrs. Higginson. And she came unheralded, as the other visitor had come, but she found Annie on the kitchen floor, scrubbing, her dress tucked up and heavy shoes on her feet. Cobby was swinging in a hammock on the kitchen porch—a hammock of Annie's own construction, out of which he could be neither shaken nor tumbled by the other "childers." These others were characteristically employed—Trixy picking up chips to build the fire with, Bobby eating an extra chunk of gingerbread on the porch steps.

"Just as Bridget described her, red hair and all"; this was Mrs. Higginson's greeting, though she addressed it to herself.

"This is Mrs. Higginson, then," was Annie's reply, "and I hope you left Bridget well."

"Finish the floor, my girl," said the old lady, just as Bridget would have said it; "I can find my way upstairs alone."

Mrs. Higginson was many years the senior of Mr. Winters, and when they met she greeted him as a mother would greet a son, though she always called him Brother John, and he called her Sister Jane. Though thin and angular there was a certain dignity about Sister Jane, not incompatible, as Annie found, with a large degree of "comfortableness" that seemed to radiate from her wherever she went. She was in the kitchen with Annie and she was in the office with Brother John; she

had the two older children with her on the lawn, and she was with Paul in the nursery garden, admiring the order in which he kept the grounds. She was neither watching nor prying, but she had a way of seeing what she wanted to see, without seeming to see it.

One day as brother and sister were looking through some papers in the office, Mrs. Higginson spied Annie through the kitchen window that looked on the gallery, working over some refractory butter till her face was red with exertion.

"Some men would have sense enough to marry a woman that left her hair in its natural color and didn't wear powder on her face an inch deep," remarked Mrs. Higginson.

To which Mr. Winters replied a little impatiently:

"Some men have sense enough not to reach out for what they cannot get."

"That's nonsense, Brother John."

"That's very sound sense, Sister Jane."

But full of sense as this conversation was, it came to an end right there; and Mrs. Higginson's visit came to an end soon after. She gave Annie a hearty smack on the cheek, when she left.

"You've been a mother to those children, God bless you!" she said. "Bridget did not say one word too much about you."

In the evening Paul confided to Annie that he had driven Mrs. Higginson to the post office before taking her to the train, and the olle Hexe, Mrs. Ault, had gotten a piece of Sister Jane's mind.

Annie had never again dared to ask in regard to the matter that was of so much interest to her. It grieved

her to see her employer's handsome sun-browned face grow thin; it was not financial trouble alone that was weighing on him, she knew that; for his sister was willing and able to help him. From something that was said in her presence she knew that Mrs. Higginson was trying to fathom the mystery of the assignment of the claim, though it was evident she did not know the relation in which Annie stood to the scoundrel whom she had known as a small boy.

A number of letters and telegrams passed back and forth between sister and brother, after Mrs. Higginson's visit, and then, one day, John Winters told Annie that he must leave her—for how long he could not tell. Should he send for Bridget? Did she want any other help or company?

His speaking eyes hung upon her after asking these questions without waiting for an answer.

"It may be that—that there will be trouble; I cannot yet get to the bottom of this assignment business, and I will let no man slander or traduce an innocent woman."

"Oh! Annie!" he burst out again, "how can I go and leave you so? Why will you not give me the right to shield you from further wrong—to protect you—to avenge you?"

She shook her head sadly, and again she said:

"I am that man's wife. And though, while I live he shall never lay his hand on me again, I am still his wife, before God, and my conscience."

"And must I sit forever lonely on a cold hearthstone?" he asked in despair.

"A hand other than mine may some day kindle again the flame in your bosom and on your hearthstone," she

made answer; but she covered her face with her hands and her frame shook with convulsive sobs.

He drew the hands tenderly from her face and passionately kissed away the traces of tears on them.

"Then I am not indifferent to you at least, I thank God for that"; he said fervently.

The summer had passed, and after the first rains, the skies seemed brighter, the air clearer, the roses more fragrant, the wealth of bloom in the garden greater than before. There were days, to be sure, when the fog drifting in from the distant Bay, lay heavy on the earth as on Annie's heart: she had decided that she must not remain here. For long days she walked through the house, through the garden and through the conservatory—which she still loved for the inexpressible pleasure it had given her the first time she saw it. She wandered from one spot to the other, bidding all farewell. After restless days and nights spent in weeping, she had decided she must leave the place that had been more like home to her than she had known since her mother's death. But leave it she must.

One thing, however, she had quite determined; Cobby should go with her, him she would not leave here. Her plan was to unbosom herself to Mrs. Higginson, and beg of her on bended knees, to let her come to live at her house with Cobby, while Bridget should go back to take care of the home at the Nursery. She would tell Bridget everything, too. Oh! she well knew the big heart the Irish woman had.

Still, misgivings would come. She brought nothing but trouble to John Winters' home and to himself, how could she expect that they should care whether her heart

broke or not, when she turned her back on the home she had found here. She was well-nigh distracted with her own thoughts; and when Paul came to tell her that he would have to leave by the earliest train the next morning, and would have to remain over one night in San Francisco, she was half tempted to tell the honest fellow to prepare Bridget for her coming.

It was arranged that Mrs. Carter, the wife of the foreman on the ranch, remain with Annie over night, Mr. Carter to do "the chores" in Paul's place.

With feverish impatience she waited for Paul to return; she dreaded and yet longed to hear from the man she loved and whose heart she was so cruelly lacerating.

When Paul came, he brought her a book which she had long wanted to read, and which Mr. Winters told her in a note he sent with it, he himself had read first. She took the volume to her own room before she opened it; even the wrapper she kissed. Had not his dear hand put this newspaper around the book? The newspaper, old as it was, had to be read, too; and she smiled at her own folly as she glanced over it.

Then suddenly a scream rang through the house. Paul came running, and the children howled simultaneously, while Annie, quickly recovering, though hysterical, declared between laughing and crying that Paul would have to take a telegram to the office at once.

Thinking it an answer to something contained in the letter, he had a horse at the door by the time she had the telegram written.

CHAPTER X.

All through the day Annie was thoughtful but happy; she kissed Cobby to his heart's content, called him "Annie's own Cobby," and held him by both hands in his first attempt to walk. And still the hours seemed to drag along on leaden feet. But the night passed, she would not have long to wait; and she took care to be in the sitting room, with all the children well out of the way, when John Winters came hurrying in. Her heart smote her when she saw his hollow eyes and his dishevelled appearance; but his face lighted up with sudden happiness when she sprang forward to meet him.

"Annie!" he cried, as he folded her in his arms, "have you relented? You have glad news for me, dearest?"

"No," she replied, "it is sad news, for it is news of a death. But it sets me free—" and she returned the kiss he pressed on her lips.

Then she pointed out to him the paragraph in the old newspaper, speaking of the killing of Harry Fulton in a gambling den in New Orleans. He had been an Impressario, the paper went on to say—correct as papers always are—but his wife's desertion had driven him to dissipation. His friends, fearing the worst, had taken charge of his affairs some time before his death, alleging that he was not capable of transacting business for himself rationally.

"Bridget must come," he said the moment he stopped reading.

"At once," added Annie.

"And we must be married directly," he went on.

"There's no hurry," she retorted saucily.

"You are never to contradict me," he said with great severity, and she replied "no," with equal humility.

Then they laughed like children, in their new-found happiness, and never noticed that Paul, with his eyes bulging out of his broad, good-natured face, retreated from the door as speedily and softly as his clumsy boots would permit. When he got well outside he slapped alternately his right leg and his left, as he ran laughing around the corner of the house and never stopped till he was safely in the cow-yard. Once landed there he slapped the fat sides of Brown Bess till she remonstrated by tossing her horns and throwing up her heels.

"Ach Gott," he said soothingly to his four-footed friend, "wie mich das frent—wie mich frent? What will the olle Hexe, Mrs. Ault, say; and Bridget—ach Gott ja —Bridget!"

Then he ran his ten fingers through his shock of straw-colored hair till each hair stood out at right angles from his head, and in this conditon he returned to the house.

No matter how hard he tried to control his features he laughed out aloud when he found that Annie had forgotten to salt the potatoes and insinuated that in his country it was just the other way; when the cook was in love the victuals were too much salted; and Mr. Winters said approvingly:

"Paul, if Bridget were here she would call you a 'broth of a boy.'"

Then Paul learned that "the boss" was going back to San Francisco tomorrow, to send Bridget over in his place; and Paul only said "Aha—Bridget."

Such a meeting as it was between Annie and her faithful friend! Mr. Winters, although he had explained all the circumstances to his sister, had left it for Annie to tell Bridget as much as she saw fit; and almost the entire day of her return was consumed in telling her all. That Paul learned a good deal of it before the day was over was only natural and not objectionable to Annie, for she had a sincere liking for the young German and he had been a steadfast friend.

When Mr. Winters returned and brought an invitation from his sister to Annie, she felt she must go, but, she asked, how could she leave Cobby?

"And his father," asked Mr. Winters, to which Annie answered that his conceit would keep him from missing her, and Mr. Winters rejoined that Annie didn't have her red hair for nothing.

It is not necessary to say how badly Mr. Winters bore Annie's departure and absence; and it required the exercise of all the authority his sister had ever had over him, to compel him to submit to the separation.

When he was allowed to come to the city at last, neither Bridget nor Paul were informed for what purpose it was; but when he had gone nearly a week, Mrs. Higginson came over and informed Bridget, who informed Paul, that "the boss" and Annie were married and had gone on their "tower."

Mrs. Higginson had not come alone; the elderly man who came with her closely inspected every room in the house, submitted a long list he had made out to Mrs. Higginson, and this lady gave him carte blanc to put in the house every bit of furniture, upholstery and carpeting which he had marked down.

To Bridget she said that Constancia, whose ambitoin had taken quite a tumble since her husband's death, had accepted the hand of a San Francisco laundry-man, and that the entire furniture of the other half of the house—the grand piano included—was to be given her as a wedding present. Mrs. Higginson had seen Mrs. Ault on her way from the city, and the things would be removed at once, as the whole house would be refurnished before Mr. and Mrs. Winters returned to their home.

Busy days were those at the Nursery. Mrs. Higginson had engaged so much extra help that Paul and Bridget did little more than stand around and admire each new carpet as it was laid, each new article of furniture as it was placed.

"And—d'ye moind, Dutchy," said Bridget, nudging him, "there's to be two rooms furnished and set aside for me missus when we come to spend summer here; and there's to be an extra 'sweet' of rooms furnished in our house in town for Mr. and Mrs. Winters when they come to see us in winter."

When all was ready Mrs. Higginson returned to San Francisco, leaving Bridget to welcome the couple home. Now at last Paul found an opportunity to "spread himself," as Bridget said. To do him justice he had both taste and judgment in his line; the decorations were really handsome; and the flowers composing the bouquets the children carried and were to present, were well chosen for the occasion.

To be sure, no one knew that Trixy had prepared an extra surprise different from the one Bridget had planned for Annie. For when Mr. and Mrs. Winters approached the house Bridget threw the front door open and Cobby

toddled out, unaided, though a little "groggy on his pins," murmuring "Mamma, mamma, mamma!" and Annie, stooping, caught him lovingly in her arms.

"Mamma's own Cobby," she whispered; "Mamma's very own."

Mr. Winters in the meantime having duly shaken hands with Paul and Bridget, had not noticed how Trixy had loaded Bobby down with both bouquets while she drew from a clump of dahlias standing near, a beautifully striped little garter snake, caught fresh that morning, and held fast, around the neck, with the young lady's brand new hair ribbon which Bridget had vainly hunted for. Dragging the reptile after her, she approached "Mamma" with her lips screwed up for a kiss; and while she raised Trixy in her arms for the caress, the snake writhed and wriggled frantically in the air, striving vainly to find a foothold somewhere. But Annie bore the sight of the snake with much more fortitude than she had displayed when this same young lady had presented her with a baby horned-toad on an envelope, some time ago.

At last the young wife had her hands free for the faithful Bridget, who congratulated and wished joy to Mrs. Winters.

"No, no—" remonstrated this lady with her arm around the Irish woman's shoulders, "I must always be 'Annie' to you."

THE COLONEL'S YOUNG WIFE

It was late in the afternoon when the mail-rider dashed into camp—alone, on a crowbait of a horse, with bridle of hair-rope, plainly an Indian outfit, and neither horse nor rider seemingly pleased with each other.

Both officers and men of Fort Greengate had been watching for Murphy and Doyle with more or less openly expressed uneasiness and the Colonel stepped forward at once as the man threw himself from his bony steed.

"Where's Doyle?" he asked, sharply.

"Wid me dead Kitty, Colonel, and along of his own horse and the three of 'em dead together." And without the slightest regard to discipline or politeness, Murphy turned his back on his commanding officer, hid his sweaty, dust-begrimed face against the lean neck of the wretchedly tired horse and sobbed.

Among the men who had crowded around, many an uncovered head was seen. There was momentary silence and then Sergeant Brown, in obedience to a nod from the Colonel, approached his comrade; Murphy turned, saluted the Colonel and handed over to the Sergeant the package of mail he had brought.

"There's a letter or two there for the Colonel's wife," he said to the Sergeant, "do you give them to her at once; you know how anxious she always is to get her mail." Then he advanced to make his report, the Colonel calling to one of the men:

"Have the cook prepare the best there is for Murphy, and now, come with me, my man."

In order to lose no time the Colonel listened to Murphy's report on their way to the Adjutant's office, and before the man had finished the directions to the spot where the mail-rider and his escort had turned out in their attempt to escape the unlooked-for attack, the blare of the bugle rang out over the tents and adobe-quarters of Fort Greengate, telling of the preparations making to pursue the murderous Apaches at once.

Fort Greengate was an important post, and Colonel Tremayne had been placed in command of it because it was a difficult task to reduce the hostile Indians who had grown rampant while the fort had been abandoned during the war, without offending those Indians who really were, or wished to pose as friends of the white man. And Colonel Tremayne, selected by the department commander for this post, though owing his rapid advancement more to distinguished services than to seniority, was not a young hotspur fresh from West Point.

Not till the detail was ready to leave camp did the Colonel permit himself to think of his own affairs and of the young wife to whom he must bid adieu for the first time since her brief sojourn at the post. Hurriedly approaching his quarters, he drew aside from the doorway the blanket which served to keep out the glaring sun, while it admitted any breeze that might be passing. The room he entered was comparatively dark, for the window without sash, of course, had also been hung with some dark, heavy material, drawn clear across the opening. Pausing a second, he discovered the figure which his eye sought, stretched upon the bed, the face resting on the arms crossed upon the pillow. He stepped to the

couch, gently raised the head and kissed the tear-wet face.

"Come, my pet," he said with a tremor in his voice, "you must not cry like that. A soldier's wife must be brave; do not grieve while I am away, it will only make my duty harder."

But sobs alone answered him; the little hands tried hard to hide the tear-stained face, and kissing her hair, her hands and her forehead, he laid her light form gently down and hastened out without looking back.

The brisk bugle notes cut the air again, and the young wife sprang up, flung back the curtain and looked out. Colonel Tremayne's form towered above all men of his command; the slouch hat and rough dress could not make an ordinary-looking man of him, and well might any woman be proud to call him her own. But the young wife wrung her hands as she gazed after him.

"False!" she cried passionately. "False to me and false to that other woman! How could he find it in his heart to disgrace me so? Traitor—yes, traitor to both." She clinched her little fists; but even as the column fast receded from sight, her mood grew softer and she called out sadly: "Adieu, my dream of bliss and happiness! Now comes my punishment, for I, too, have been false to my first love and will soon lie within a grave as lonely and neglected as the one in which lies that poor boy."

She drew a letter from under her pillow and without unfolding it, she repeated to herself: "And water stands in the neglected grave where it has sunken in from the winter's frost and the thaws of spring."

"I must go," she said with sudden determination; "go ere the woman carries out her threat. She is right. How

could I believe that I had won for my own the man who belongs to another woman—heart and hand? But it will kill me, oh, it will kill me!" and the poor, helpless woman pressed her hot fingers to her aching head.

In the meantime the men had crowded around Murphy as soon as he was free, and not only had the cook produced the best he had, but Murphy's friends had purchased almost the entire stock at the sutler store, principally oysters, lobsters, sardines and tobacco. All these delicacies were spread temptingly on the rough table in the company cook house and benches and seats were at a premium here. Those who could find none squatted down along the adobe wall or stood leaning up against this support. While Murphy was appeasing his righteous appetite, they conversed among themselves, but when Murphy struck a match to light his new pipe with, every eye became fastened on him at once.

"D'ye see, boys," he began, "the night before we left Tucson I dreamed that me mother, dead and wid the saints these ten years, came to me and she says, says she, 'Pat, me boy, it's a hard road ye've got to travel,' and she shuk her head and was gone."

A solemn pause, and then he continued: "I didn't tell Doyle about it, but I thought he looked kind o' down in the mouth himself when we left camp. We stopped at the Water-holes about sundown, got our supper and rested our horses till 3 o'clock this morning, and never saw sign of an Indian, look as sharp as we might. After we had passed the Cienega, along about 9 o'clock, we had just concluded to rest before we reached the sand-hills, when all at once the whole d—d plain seemed alive with Indians. Such yelling and howling, such flying of

shot and arrows you never heard in all your life. Where they came from I don't know; but it seems to me there wasn't a bush or a weed three inches high that a full-grown Injun, pony and all, didn't rise up behind. We put spurs to our beasts—though it wasn't needed; once they heard the yells they flew like the wind. Purty soon the redskins got into line, and I knew there was no escape for us in flight—for they commenced to hem us in—you know the way the red devils do, circling 'round, single file, each giving a shot in passing, and the first of them ready to attack us in the rear while the last one was firing at us in front. 'Tom,' says I, 'we'll have to make breastworks of our horses—me poor Kitty, I can't kill her.' 'Nor I my sorrel,' says Tom. 'But it's got to be done,' says I, 'and quick.' And I sprang to the sorrel's head as Tom jumped down and caught Kitty by the bridle and they fell almost together; and the Injuns were on us in good earnest by that time. The very first shot that Tom fired brought down a redskin, but he must have been tied to the horse, for he never fell to the ground, though I swear I saw his carcass swinging on the other side of the horse. By this time they were howling like mad, and things were getting redhot. I—tell—you!"

He rested his hands on his knees a moment, laid down his pipe, and continued:

"But they got their revenge for that worthless brute. Every devil in the pack took deliberate aim at poor Tom from that moment, and Tom knew it, too. Says he: 'They'll get away with me first,' says he, and he'd hardly said it, when his carbine dropped and all he said was, 'God help you, Pat.'"

The trooper picked up his pipe again, looked at it meditatively, and said: "Now—I don't quite understand what followed. You know where the trail comes in from Calabasas there; between the sand hills? Well, I thought I'd spied something coming along there, but I'd said nothing for fear we both might be disappointed if it was more Injuns instead of some of the settlers there, or maybe some of the men from Camp Hallen. But when they picked Tom off, I just cast my eyes that way, and here there was a whole war party of Injuns come swinging round that last curve in the hills. Of course, they could see at a glance that there was only one poor wretch left to kill off, and for that reason only one of them raised his rifle, took good aim at me and—brought down a redskin flying past with his gun leveled at me ready to shoot. Such yelling and shouting, and racing and ra'rin' as there was then! But the shot that was intended for me and killed the Injun, must have struck the horse somewhere, for he leaped clear over me, and as he lost his Injun I just grabbed him by the lariat rope, swung myself on, and left them to fight over the mishap all they liked. But I can't make it out; come to think of it, that they kept up the firing behind me, but neither bullets nor arrows came my way. When the Colonel gets back I must report it to him, for it's mighty queer in my opinion."

The whole crowd went into details, each particular phase of the attack was compared with other attacks and fights in which the soldiers had been engaged; but this thing of one Injun killing another instead of the white man he had aimed at was a new feature entirely in Indian fights.

After awhile the sun went down on Fort Greengate, and the Colonel's young wife was not yet to be seen. Her horse, anxious for his evening's run, had come whinnying up to the Colonel's quarters, for the side saddle was kept there, and it was the Colonel's boast that his wife could saddle her horse as well as the best trooper could do it.

Later still, Sergeant Brown passing along, laid hold of his mane and led him away, knowing that his mistress was quite ill from the shock of being left alone in camp for the first time. He knew it, because Mrs. Wood, the laundress of Fort Greengate, had told him so. She had waited on the Colonel's lady, according to his directions, but she found she had cried herself to sleep like the child she was. Bless her heart!

Water call, Stable call, and Retreat had all sounded, and still the curtains hung close about the door and windows of the Colonel's house. But the Colonel's wife was not there.

The doctor, coming from the hospital tent, where he had half a dozen cases of Arizona fever, had extended his walk in the cool of the evening. Outside the lines he came suddenly upon a figure moving wearily toward him,—the Colonel's young wife. Her face scarlet, her hair hanging loose over her neck and shoulders, and she was weeping softly to herself like a lost child. To all appearances she did not see him, and the doctor's first impulse was to make his presence known, but his conviction was that he had another patient with malarial fever, and gently accosting her, he held out his hand in greeting. But she only looked at him with dull, unseeing eyes.

"I am going to his grave," she said: "His poor, neglected grave, sunken in from the frosts of winter and the thaws of spring and standing full of water."

"Certainly we'll go there," said the doctor soothingly, "and we'll plant flowers on his poor, neglected grave; roses and—forget-me-nots, to be sure." And he drew her hand through his arm and led her silently back to the post. But through his mind there ran stories of a handsome, dissipated young lieutenant, a cousin of the Colonel's, to whom they said she had been engaged. The father had broken off the match and Elsie, they said, had been quite willing to marry the older cousin when she became convinced that he loved her and—was to be Colonel of the 106th cavalry, but then—"they" will talk, in camp and court alike.

Passing by the tent of the laundress, the doctor gave signs to follow them and directed the woman to put the young wife to bed, while he sent to the hospital steward for the soothing draught he wanted to give her. Then he came back once more just before taps, found Mrs. Tremayne asleep in bed and Mrs. Wood snoring on an improvised couch beside her, and went home himself to sleep the sleep of the just.

What consternation there was the next morning when neither the Colonel's young wife nor her horse could be found within the precincts of Fort Greengate, it is hard to describe. But the officer, left in command by the Colonel, immediately detailed six picked men, under Sergeant Brown, to follow the poor lady, who, according to the doctor's statement, had left camp in the delirium of fever.

Across the burning plain, in the meantime, dashed the frenzied creature, who was flying from fancied disgrace, and who meant to make atonement by kneeling at the grave so reproachfully charged to her fickleness. On she sped, the horse could race no faster than her thoughts and wishes flew. Whither she went she neither knew nor cared, so long as every leap of the horse left more space between her and the home she must never again claim. The sun scorched her face and blinded her eyes, for she had no hat to draw down over them; if she had had one when she left the post she must have lost it since.

There must be a veil in the pocket of her saddle, she now remembered, and she tried to check the mad gallop to which for hours she had been urging her horse. But she found she could not control him; no horse could be held with an Indian on either side of him in pursuit.

Near sundown that day the Colonel, with men and horses worn and jaded, returned to Fort Greengate. They had buried Tom Doyle and marked his grave. Poor Kitty and Tom's sorrel had been covered with sand and what straggling brush could be found, though the coyotes would soon scratch them out again and hold high jinks on the fallen steeds.

Wichard, the guide and scout, who could read "Indian signs" better than any white man in the territory, had declared that two tribes, hostile to each other, had had a tilt here on this spot. He went so far as to say that the two mail riders had been attacked by the Coyoteres, while these in turn had been "jumped" by the Mescalero Apaches.

To the doctor had fallen the lot to break the news of his young wife's straying from camp to the Colonel. His brown cheek grew ashen while he listened, and the officer he had left in command hastened to tell of the expedition sent out early in the morning, adding that every enlisted man, as well as every officer in the garrison, had begged permission to join the column which would doubtless leave Fort Greengate at daybreak tomorrow.

"Tell them that I thank them all," he said huskily, "and that I shall need some of them tomorrow." But when he reached his quarters he hunted keenly for any note or scrap of writing which his young wife might have left, in spite of what the doctor had said about her going away in the delirium of fever. While so engaged Wichard, the guide, came to report to him the conclusion he had arrived at since seeing Murphy on his return. He said positively that the man's life had been saved by the Mescaleros, who had come up to the Coyoteres with hostile intent. As the friendly Mescaleros were among the best governed of all Apache tribes, while the Coyoteres were vagrant, as well as hostile, it was quite probable that the Colonel's lady, as well as Sergeant Brown and his little band, were perfectly safe; for the Coyoteres, so lately punished, would not take the war-path again in the near future.

There was reason in what the scout said—the Colonel knew it; and after the doctor and some of the officers had come to bid their commander good night, the wearied man sought and found an hour's repose before the expedition started out. Leaving camp before sunrise, the cool air fanning his aching brow, the sorely-tried man strove to assume a look of cheerfulness, trust-

ing to a kind Providence that this feeling might grow in his heart apace. Wichard and one of the junior Lieutenants were in advance of the column, and the Colonel knew that no "sign" would be overlooked; and involuntarily he relapsed into the painful thoughts he had tried so hard to banish. Why had she gone? Where had she gone? To think of her wandering over this dry, cactus-strewn plain, sick and delirious, perishing of thirst, and no one near to hear her pitiful cry for water. Or, perhaps—well, his conscience was clear, he told himself, but she, foolish child—had she really loved him? He would do justice, he vowed to himself in this dread hour, even though it broke his heart, if only he could find her safe and unharmed.

He drew a deep breath—had his vow been heard? His prayer answered?

An irrepressible commotion ran through the ranks as Wichard was seen to throw up his arm suddenly, and the Lieutenant whipped out his field glass. The Colonel was beside them in an instant, and almost simultaneously a shout went up from a hundred throats, a shout that was against all rules and regulations, but for which their commander never took his soldiers to task. A shout in answer, weaker by a good many lungs, but just as detrimental to discipline, rang back on the air, and pretty soon Sergeant Brown, waving a lady's hat, instead of his own, disintegrated himself from a whirl of dust, Indians, cavalry men and a mass of wildly-plunging horses, and approached the Colonel, who had galloped forward to meet him.

"She's safe, Colonel!" Another serious offense against etiquette and discipline, but no one noticed it, and the

Colonel clasped his hands for the second as in silent prayer, and then the men cheered their comrade and the news he brought.

While a halt was ordered, and the soldiers dismounted, the Sergeant reported that toward sundown yesterday they had met three Indians, who had waved a white flag and the madam's hat, in token of their peaceful mission. They said they were Mescaleros, friendly to the whites, and had a message from their chief to the Big Captain of the white soldiers; that the wife of the Big Captain was in their lodge; that they were good Indians and wanted the Great Father in Washington to know it. The Sergeant, thinking it no harm to use a **ruse de guerre** in order to reach the Colonel's wife, had intimated that he himself was the Big Captain; but the spokesman of the Indians had pointed to the chevrons on the Sergeant's arm and had drawn, with his finger, the shape of a shoulderstrap, with the rude semblance of an eagle, on the Sergeant's shoulder.

Wichard was called up to interpret, and he repeated after the Indians what the Sergeant had already understood them to say, adding that they seemed anxious for the Big Captain to meet their Chief. So the Sergeant was sent back to the post with his men, and the long column took up the line of march again. A hot, tiresome march it was for man and beast alike; in the middle of the day the torture of the scorching sun overhead and the burning sand under foot, grew almost intolerable. Many a canteen swung empty from the saddle, and many a wistful look was sent in the direction of the Colonel, who sat lost in thought on his jaded horse. At last Wichard approached him to say that they were nearing

a water-hole in the low hills before them and that he had convinced himself of the good faith of the Indians, so that no ambush was to be feared.

"To be sure," he said, in answer to the guide's address, "I have been miserably selfish to forget the men and their horses." And the Lieutenant issued the welcome order to halt and dismount when the water-hole was reached.

After an hour's rest the march was resumed, and in time the tents and wickiups of an Indian encampment came in sight. It was easy enough to distinguish the tent occupied by the chief, but when Wichard advanced with the Colonel to act as interpreter, the Indian at the entrance intimated that Colonel Tremayne must go in alone. Without a moment's hesitation he entered, and the blanket doing duty as tent-flap was dropped behind him.

Before him stood a tall, brown warrior, tricked out in the finest of Indian finery—a chief, beyond doubt, though his head was bare of the eagle feathers which they wear so proudly. For the length of a second they stood, looking eye into eye; then the Indian chief slowly stretched out his hand and the other started back, thunderstruck.

"Branson!" he exclaimed. "You? Here?"

"You need not fear to touch my hand, Tremayne," said the chief bitterly. "No white man's blood has ever sullied it. My Indian braves know that if they ever become hostile to the whites, mine must be the first life they take."

"No, indeed, old fellow, I was not afraid to take your hand," protested the Colonel, seizing both and pressing them. "I was simply startled out of my senses."

"Let me tell you about your wife first," the other went on. "She is fast asleep in the next tent, and the old squaw waiting on her says she must not be waked up out of that sleep. But you may take just one look at her,—then return."

Eagerly enough the Colonel availed himself of the permission; and his heart throbbed hard and fast as he looked upon the form of his wife, slumbering gently on her couch of robes and blankets, while an old Indian woman, crouched at her side, fanned the sleeper with slow, steady motion.

"How can I ever thank you, Branson," he said, returning to the chief's presence. "Nor is it the first time you have played providence for me, I believe; it was you, no doubt, who saved one of my men the other day."

"Yes, my tribe is on the war path against the Coyoteres, and we were hunting them when we came unexpectedly on your two fellows—too late to save the other one."

"But, in the name of God, Branson, what are you doing here, and how came you here? You—you committed suicide in New York harbor, from Fort Columbus—before the war was over; your body was found, if I remember right."

"I was glad to hear of it," admitted the dead man. "It was the fitting end for a man who had proved himself a false friend, perfidious husband, recreant to his trust. But I was not base enough to make the coward's plea—'The woman tempted me!' I bore my disgrace as I had borne my disappointment—alone and in silence."

He leaned his elbows on the rude table, and buried his face in his hands.

"Poor fellow"—his friend said it with profound feeling. "Is there no way out of this trackless wilderness back to a better life for you?"

"None," came the answer, steady, but in muffled tones, "as I have made my bed so must I lie upon it. May the end of all things earthly come soon for me—Amen! Now let us speak of yourself," he continued, shaking off the gloom that had settled on the two old friends. "Do you know why your petite wife undertook that wild ride?"

"She was sick—" began the husband.

"Bah," said the other contemptuously. "Our army surgeons are never asked in the course of their examination, 'Cans't minister to a mind diseased.' "

"What can you mean?" The brave soldier trembled, perhaps for the first time in his life.

The other handed him a paper he had taken from out of a fur robe and bade him read it. "The old Indian woman found it in your wife's clothing. I have read it, and may be able to explain some things you do not understand in the letter."

The letter was tear-stained and crumpled and written in a cramped foreign-looking hand, and it read:

"You think yourself the wife of Colonel Tremayne, poor little insignificant thing, of whom he used to speak as one adoring him. To be sure you have played your cards well. My Allan tells me he is not wealthy. I go to Europe again to win wealth and fame and in that time you throw over poor Lieutenant Tremayne and make love to my husband. Take heed, I am on my way to your garrison. I bring my marriage lines and I will disgrace you. Go, fickle-hearted, false woman, go to kneel

by the grave of poor Lieutenant Tremayne, who died broken-hearted for you. I have seen his lonely, neglected grave, sunken in from the frosts of winter and the thaws of spring; and water stands in the grave as if the heavens had wept tears of sorrow over him who died of your inconsistancy. Flee ere I reach Fort Greengate and tear the mask off your face and assert my rights to the place beside my husband. For this time only I sign myself as

"BLANCA DE LA STRADA."

The Colonel could find no words in his bewilderment.

"But I was never married before," he protested. "Who is this woman?"

"That I can tell you," answered his old comrade. "She is an Italian, big black eyed, a singer of some note, with whom your cousin was madly in love at one time, while stationed in New York harbor during the war. That he married her under your name and rank I have no doubt, speaking of you, I presume, as the cousin Lieutenant. That he persuaded her later to go on a trip to Europe, I do not doubt either. Reckless as he might be, he knew he could never bring that woman into army circles. I can understand, too, how easy it was for her to trace Colonel Tremayne, though I don't quite understand how the scamp could have mentioned your little wife to her."

"My wife—" began the Colonel, a little unsteadily, "is so much younger than I am; she knew my cousin."

"Ah, that accounts for it," interrupted the other, anxious to save his friend's feelings. "I never knew where the fellow brought up. What does she know about his grave? Where did he die?"

"He was assigned to Fort Riley at the close of the war, grew disgracefully dissipated, was cashiered and shot himself at Topeka."

"That is where this letter is from," observed Branson. "I presume the lady had gone to Fort Riley to locate you. Can you not fancy Old Pike, who is in command, giving information to this lady?" he asked with a grim smile.

A troubled look sat on his old comrade's face. "How shall I convince my wife?" he asked. "Just because she is so perfectly unsophisticated herself she has taken all these theatrical phases seriously and in earnest."

"Besides, there being some truth in the letter," Branson put in, perhaps because he wanted a just share of the trouble laid on young Mrs. Tremayne's pretty shoulders. "But you can explain at once," he continued, pointing to the old woman who had stuck her head into the tent. "Your wife is awake now."

A heart-rending cry was heard as the Colonel disappeared in the tent, and the next moment his wife lay weeping on his breast.

"Oh, my husband," she cried, "for you are my husband, are you not? You do not belong to that other woman, do you?"

"Am I the man to fall in love with painted stage queens, you foolish little girl?" he asked.

"But she knows your middle name," persisted poor jealous little Elsie, "and you never would tell me what the 'A' stood for in your name."

"My cousin's middle name was Allan—not mine. Look here," he said, drawing some papers from his breast pocket and unfolding one for her to read. "A soldier's

life is an uncertain one, and I have tried to provide for my little wife's future in case of my death. What name do you read there?"

"James Adam Tremayne; but why would you not tell me the name?"

"Adam is not a romantic name," he said shamefacedly, "and I knew you would think it very commonplace."

She was laughing through her tears now, and declared herself ready and anxious to go home at once. There was a tap outside and on being admitted, Wichard said the doctor had entrusted him with a bottle of medicine for madam, in case she should become faint on the way home.

"I'll take it, Wichard," she said merrily, "in place of that nasty old draught he fixed for me the other night. I distinctly remember knocking it out of the laundress' hands, but she was afraid to tell the doctor."

As the medicine was port wine of the kind Uncle Sam keeps in his apothecary, and as the cobwebs had all been cleared out of the young wife's brain, it was more potent in restoring health and cheerfulness than the dissipated sleeping draught had been.

Since there was a late moon they started as soon as the horses were sufficiently recruited, the Indian chief, with a number of his tribe, escorting them. At daybreak they parted, and Branson and Tremayne, who had ridden far in advance of the column, clasped hands for the last time. Wichard had scanned the chief closely, though Branson had had the foresight to be the Indian chief again, even to the headgear of eagles' feathers and the paint on face and forehead. No one knew what it cost the pseudo-Indian to restrain the instinctive movement of head and

hand in passing his friend's wife; but he felt the eyes of the old scout on him, and he only nodded as he passed along.

In the cool of the evening, just before retreat, they saw the post before them alive with men waving their hats and cheering till the echoes rang, and as the Colonel uncovered his head to respond to their greeting, a tear stood in his eye. There were men there whose locks were already showing silver threads, while their faces were young and their strength in its prime. They were the men with whom he had stood shoulder to shoulder in line of battle, when the roar of cannon and thick-flying musket balls had made a hell around them, but they had never flinched nor wavered. And these men now gathered about their old commander and his young wife greeting them as if the rules and regulations of the Unites States army had never been written or revised.

Months later, a single Indian rode boldly into Fort Greengate. He proved to be one of the three who were bringing madam's riding hat as a peace pledge to the camp that time. Wichard was on hand directly—he knew he should have to act as interpreter. The Indian brought the tidings that their chief had died three suns ago; the arrow of a treacherous Coyotero had laid him in the dust, and he had been bidden by his chief long since to announce his death to the Big Captain whenever it should occur.

Wichard, the Colonel shrewdly suspected, was plying the Indian with questions on his own account, in the course of the interview, regarding their mysterious chief. But the Indian was on his guard, and only the Colonel, outside of his own braves, knew the secret of their dead chief.

THE END OF THE SONG

In the days of my youth—in my soldiering days—I was accused of being both sentimental and romantic. The recital of a touching incident could move me to tears, and I always preferred a sad song to a gay one. Perhaps it was the streak of romance in my composition, that made the idea of accompanying the command to which the lieutenant was attached, so attractive. I carried it out, at least, and found the surroundings of Fort Bayard, New Mexico, which the California troops had been garrisoning till we arrived, as wildly romantic as heart could wish.

Of the troops of Regular Cavalry, called "the Rifles" more often than Third Cavalry, even as late as the close of the Civil War, many of the Fifth Infantry, U. S. A., marching with our command, most men were raw recruits. Out of the ranks of our own soldiers, we had been allowed to pick three men, an orderly, a cook and a waiter, which was very good for a simple lieutenant and his wife; but this was under the ancient order of things, and out in the wilderness. And besides, I was the only lady in camp, and there was no other white woman, except the company laundress, for a hundred miles around. So the commanding officer overlooked many things, which would have been unfavorably passed upon under other circumstances.

All of our three men were Germans, and I soon saw that they would presume upon my being of German birth, if not checked in time. That is, they laid all kinds

of requests and petitions before me, which were to be insinuated to the lieutenant at a favorable opportunity. One request they made, I granted at once. Among the Infantry was one more German, a green one, just out from the native heath, and not yet able to speak English. The "dough-boys" treated this poor fellow rather too roughly, they said; especially a big Irish sergeant, who made life almost unbearable to the poor man.

Charlie Bochterle submitted this to me one day when he came to clear off the table, though he was cook. Pinkow repeated the tale when he brushed up around the dining tent, a little later; and Reichard, the orderly, ventured on saying something about it to the lieutenant himself. But the lieutenant had no right to interfere, and wanted to know nothing about how they treated recruits in the Infantry camp. However, I was courageous as any soldier those days, and I surprised the commanding officer one day by a request for an additional man. There was a German among the Infantry recruits, I told him, who knew all about raising vegetables, and I was very anxious to procure seeds and have a garden, for there was but little chance of a post-garden being started in the near future. So permission was given Mohrman to make himself useful in the Cavalry camp, after he had drilled with the Infantry in their camp.

The poor fellow was suffering with homesickness. I never knew so heart-broken a man. I think he would have died if he had not been allowed to hold communion with our three men, who were the only Germans beside himself. The commanding officer had other things to do than watching to what use I had put the new man; but

between the other three Dutchmen and myself, we gave him employment enough to keep him on our side of the camp.

For Fort Bayard was only a camp at that time. Though it was said that these troops had been sent to build the fort, it was really not built until later, when I had already left New Mexico, and the army. At this time, just after the war, the Indians had gained ground all over the Territory, so that the miners and other white settlers had pretty well abandoned it. The California troops had had a brush with "poor Lo" more than once, before we came here; and the fight had always been over Uncle Sam's cattle, which the Indians wanted the worst way. At one time the herders had seen a number of men with an officer ride up to inspect the cattle under their care, so they thought, but when the officer threw up his forage cap, there was an unearthly yell, and the men turned out to be Apaches, and only one herder came back to camp to tell the tale. At another time the horses as well as the cattle were stampeded at night, and only one dead horse was recovered by those sent in pursuit. However, there was a larger force now, and we proposed to eat the army beef ourselves, for it was very good.

Mohrman, who had marched with the command, composed of Infantry and Cavalry together, across the plains from Fort Leavenworth, had not thrived on this little walk. But the hardest labor required of him now was to assist Charley in the cook tent sometimes; more frequently, however, he spent his time cleaning and brushing the lieutenant's clothes and looking after our saddles, mine more particularly, for it always seemed to

require some little attention. I had never realized what a lot of clothes the lieutenant must have, judging by the amount of cleaning that was necessary; but I fancy the brass buttons of Mohrman's three comrades sometimes needed polishing, too.

His favorite place was the space between the cook tent and the two tents opening into each other, which served us for quarters. The front tent represented dining room and reception hall, and through this we passed into the adjoining tent, which was sitting room and bedroom. Intrenched here, between our cook tent and the living tent, he was well out of sight and seemed perfectly content, if not positively happy.

After a few days of this new life, I heard him occasionally sing snatches of German songs, under his breath, as if in doubt of the suitableness of his proceeding. After a few days more he sang a little louder, and then one day, while polishing brass buttons for dear life, he forgot all about his surroundings, I presume, and sang out with his full voice, and his whole heart in the song.

I was in the tent, reading, and I kept as still as a mouse, for he was singing something quite new to me. It had always been a matter of pride with me, that I knew every folk and soldier-song written in the German language, from "Morgenroth" down to "Tanneboom, O Tanneboom, wie grun sind deine Blatter!" But this was something I had never heard before, and it was good; even touching and tender, when it came to the end of the song. There must have been sixteen verses of it, but I should not have objected to twenty-six of them, for each had the same refrain:

"Mein trenes Lieb—
Mein trenes Lieb!"

The peculiarly sad, long-drawn notes of the North German folk song in the first stanza, "My Own True Love," seemed to intensify and grow more insistent in the last cadence, "My Faithful Love."

The commanding officer had objected to my riding out with the lieutenant, of late, as the Indians had become troublesome in the neighboring country, and he could not permit as many men to leave the camp as he deemed necessary for our escort. There had been more men detailed as herders of cattle and horses, since the Apaches were known to be prowling around again. So it came that I sat sewing or reading in the tent day after day, listening to Mohrman's singing, and always waiting impatiently for my favorite song, which I was determined to learn by merely listening to it. After retreat, I could hear the men singing in their quarters, and they, too, sang "Mein Trenes Leib, Mein Trenes Leib," each of them, no doubt, thinking of some Gretchen or Katherine far away.

I feel quite sure I should have learned it in a short time had not the listening lessons and the song had such a sudden end.

The Apaches, one fine afternoon, did succeed in stampeding the herd, and killing one herder. A detachment, partly Cavalry, part Infantry, was hot in pursuit long before the sun went down; and when the troops came back next day, one man carried his saddle, for his horse had been killed under him; one man sat on his horse, wounded, supported on either side by an Infantryman,

and one man never came back at all. That was Mohrman. But he was reported as missing, not killed.

The wounded man was sent to the hospital tent, a fresh detail picked, and again the clatter of horses' hoofs and the tramp of men was heard, as the little command started in search of the missing man. Early the next morning they found him. He must have died of the arrow still in his breast, on the night of the day he left camp, but the coyotes had not molested the body, and the poor fellow was brought in and given a soldier's burial. Our three men, Charley, Pinkow and Reichard, asked permission to sing at his grave, and as the place of burial was not far away, I could hear it all, the muffled drum, the fife toned down somehow, to accord with it, and later on the singing of poor Mohrman's comrades, the song of the true love, the faithful love, waiting patiently for his return.

From the hospital tent came the sobs of the wounded man, it was not far off, and I remember thinking how he was spending all his strength crying over Mohrman and his song. As for me, I had thrown myself on my bed, crying bitterly, though not so loudly as the wounded soldier. I had my head in the pillows to choke my sobs; but the man in the hospital tent fairly howled at the end of the song, at the end of the refrain borne on the breeze to us again and again—

"Mein trenes Lieb,
Mein trenes Lieb!"

DRUMS

That bright May day, months ago, while looking from my window on the procession which had formed to wreathe with flowers of remembrance the graves of heroes fallen in the war of the rebellion, all sorts of queer thoughts kept running riot in my head. They were memories rather than thoughts, and were called into life by the beat of the drum.

Not only that the martial music of the drums was such that it might have aroused the fallen braves from their gory beds, but the sound recalled to my mind other drums I had heard, beaten in different localities and under a variety of conditions. Those broad fields of glory, the Soldiers' Cemeteries, sprang up before my eyes, and I heard again the fife and drum that led the single file of soldiers who bore a sleeping comrade to his last repose. How many times, when out for an afternoon's drive in the vicinity of St. Louis, during the dark days of Civil War, did we meet such a cortege —impressive from its very simplicity. But of the poignancy of grief and the depths of sorrow which these little squeaking fifes, accompanied by the beat of muffled drums, will express, no one can have any idea, unless he has heard for himself.

How differently the drums, unmuffled, and in resonant tones, sounded when heading a new regiment that passed through the streets on their way from Benton Barracks to their first battlefield. Clear and sharp the fifes piped out their shrill notes, and the drummer boys lustily beat

their drums, as if they had no thought for the bullets that would soon whistle about their ears, and lay them low on the field. The most striking object in a photograph of the Antietam battlefield, taken soon after that fierce fight, was the lifeless form of a drummer boy, amid the slain, his poor dead arms still bent as if holding the drum sticks—his drum, broken, lying a stone's throw away.

With what deafening rattle the innumerable drums were beaten in the grand parade at the close of the war, in Washington, when Sherman's "bummers"—the bona fide article—brought up the rear of that almost endless cavalcade! Darkies and bummers, mixed, riding or driving before them mules and donkeys, on which were perched live specimens out of Noah's Ark, from a raccoon to a Thomas cat! Such screeching of parrots and crowing of game cocks, such bleating of young lambs and chattering of old monkeys, were never heard before nor since. They were all war trophies, and so many proofs that the drummer boy had "beaten" his way through the South with success.

No beating of drums ever excited the same feeling as the sound of the "long roll" through the streets of Washington on the night of Lincoln's assassination. To those who were already asleep when the news of the tragedy became known—which it did about two minutes after the dread deed had been done—the sudden alarm must have been fearfully startling. Even to myself, who happened to be only a block or two away from Ford's Theater, one of a numerous party, this sounding of the general alarm had something terrifying, though apprised of the murder a moment before by a bare-headed, wild-eyed individual, who rushed into the house, and threw open the

parlor doors without the ceremony of knocking or asking permission to enter.

A hollow mockery is the drumming of the little band at the head of recruits or regular soldiery on the march to a frontier post. Wearily they plod along through sand, dust, or mud, with the rain pouring or the sun blazing down on their drooping heads. Pretty soon a village or settlement comes into sight, and instantly the noisy taps of the drum sticks and the ear-splitting squeals of the fife seem frantically to assert and insist that "there's nothing half so funny, nor so full of harmless glee, as the roving joyous life of a bold soldier boy."

Entirely different these same drums sound when the post or the camp has been reached, and the brisk tattoo seems to say, "Well, we're in an Indian country, and we've all got scalps to lose, but we'll keep a sharp lookout for 'Lo' by day and by night." "Taps" have a more quieting, reassuring sound; they say, "All safe, lights out; good night." In the morning when the sun rides high above the mountain that looks down on the plain, and guard mount goes forward in camp, the drums seem to call out volubly to the rugged heights, "We're all here yet, and we all mean to stay, though a soldier's life in these parts is not so very gay."

What sort of a noise the drum makes when it sounds the call for battle when fighting begins in earnest, I don't know; I never made strenuous efforts to get near enough to learn. As a fear-inspiring instrument, the drum may be named when in the hands of a small boy, about Christmas time.

One of the finest poems of its kind in our literature is Bret Harte's "Reveille," and in that he gives the roll of

the drums as forcefully as Poe gives the jingle and clangor of the bells in his immortal poem, "The Bells."

Hark! I hear the tramp of thousands,
And of armed men the hum;
Lo! a nation's hosts have gathered
Round the quick alarming drum,—
Saying, "Come,
Freeman, come!
Ere your heritage be wasted," said the quick alarming drum.

"Let me of my heart take counsel:
War is not of life the sum;
Who shall stay and reap the harvest
When the autumn days shall come?"
But the drum
Echoed, "Come!
Death shall reap the braver harvest," said the solemn-sounding drum.

"But when won the coming battle,
What of profit springs therefrom?
What if conquest, subjugation,
Even greater ills become?"
But the drum
Answered, "Come!
You must do the sum to prove it," said the Yankee-answering drum.

"What if, 'mid the cannons' thunder,
Whistling shot and bursting bomb,
When my brothers fall around me,
Should my heart grow cold and dumb?"
But the drum
Answered, "Come!
Better there in death united, than in life a recreant,—come!"

Thus they answered,—hoping, fearing;
Some in faith, and doubting some,
Till a trumpet-like voice proclaiming,
Said, "My chosen people, come!"
Then the drum,
Lo! was dumb,
For the great heart of the nation, throbbing, answered, "Lord, we come!"

—From Bret Harte's Poems, by Permission of Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

The drum, as an educator, is spoken of by Heine in his **Book le Grand.**

"**Parbleu!**" he says, "how much do I not owe to the French drummer who was quartered at our house; who looked like a devil, but was good as an angel at heart, and beat the drum so excellently well. It was a small, mobile figure, with a terrible black mustache, from under which the red lips pouted fiercely, while the black eyes darted hither and thither. Little boy that I was, I stuck to him like a burr, helped him to brighten his buttons till they shone like mirrors, to whiten his vest with chalk—for Monsier le Grand was anxious to please—and followed him to the parade and guard-mount. There was nothing then but glitter of arms and merriment—**les jours de fetes sont passes.** Monsieur le Grand knew but little broken German, only the principal expressions —'bread,' 'kiss,' 'honor'; but he could make himself very well understood on his drum. If, for instance, I did not know what the word 'liberte' meant, he beat the 'Marseillaise,' and I understood him. Did I not know the meaning of the word 'egalite,' he played the march, **'Ca ira! ca ira! Les aristocrats a la lanterne,'** and I comprehended.

"Once he wanted to explain to me the word **'l' Allemagne,'** and he drummed that all too primitive tune which we hear at country fairs, where they have trained bears to perform, 'Dum, dum, dum.' It made me mad, but I understood him. * * I speak of the palace garden at Dusseldorf, where I often lay on the grass and listened devoutly when Monsieur le Grand told of the deeds of war of the great Emperor, beating the marches which were drummed during those actions, so that I

vividly saw and heard it all. I saw the passage over the Simplon, the Emperor in front, behind him climbing the brave Grenadiers, while the startled birds croaked overhead, and the glaciers thundered in the distance; I saw the Emperor in his gray cloak at Marengo; I saw the Emperor on his horse at the battle by the Pyramids —nothing but powder, smoke, and Mamelukes there; I saw the Emperor at the battle of Austerlitz. Hui! how the bullets whistled over the smooth ice plane. I saw, I heard the battle at Jena—dum, dum, dum; I saw, I heard the battle of Eilau, Wagram—but really, I could hardly bear it any more. Monsieur le Grand drummed so that my own tympanum was almost destroyed.

"While seated on the old bench in the palace garden, dreaming myself back into the past, I heard confused voices behind me, deploring the hard fate of the poor Frenchmen who had been dragged, during the Russian war, to Siberia, and held there as prisoners for years, although peace had been proclaimed, and who were only now returning home. When I looked around I saw them, these orphan children of glory. Through the rents of their tattered uniforms peered naked misery; in their weather-shrunk faces lay sad, deep-sunken eyes; and, though maimed, limping and feeble, they still kept up a kind of military gait, and, strangely enough, a drummer with his drum staggered along at their head. With a secret shudder, I remembered the story of the soldiers who fell in battle during the day, rose up again at night, and, with the drummer at their head, marched toward their native town.

"Truly, this poor French drummer seemed to have climbed, half decayed, out of his grave; it was only a

shrunken gray shadow, in a dirty, torn capote, a deceased yellow face with a huge mustache, which hung dejectedly down over his shriveled lips. The eyes were like blackened tinder, in which gleamed but a few remaining sparks; but by a single one of these sparks did I recognize Monsieur le Grand. He recognized me, too, and drew me down on the grass beside him, and there we sat again, as in former times, when he taught me French and modern history on his drum. It was still the old familiar drum, and I could not wonder enough how he had protected it from the Russian grasp. He drummed again, as he used to, only without speaking. But if his lips were closely silent, his eyes spoke all the more, lighting up victoriously as he played the old marches. The poplars beside us trembled as the red 'Guillotine March' resounded. The struggles for liberty, the old battles, all the mighty deeds of the Emperor he drummed as of yore, and the drum seemed to become a sentient being, glad of the chance to express its inward delight.

"I heard again the thunder of the cannons, the whistling of the bullets, the din of battle; I saw again the death bravery of the Guards, the fluttering of the banners, the Emperor on his horse; but a sad tone gradually crept into the most exultant roll. From the drum there came sounds in which the wildest joy and the deepest mourning were strangely mingled; it was a march of victory and a funeral march at once. Le Grand's eyes were ghostly wide open, and in them I saw nothing but a white field of ice and snow, covered with the dead; that was the 'Battle of Moscow.'

"I had never thought that the old, hard drum could yield such wailing notes as Monsieur le Grand now drew

from it. They were beaten tears, and they sounded softer and softer, and, like a dull echo, broke the sighs from Le Grand's breast. And he himself grew weaker and more ghost-like; his withered hands trembled with the cold, he sat as in a dream, only stirring the air with his drum sticks, and seemed to listen to voices afar off; and at last he looked at me with a deep—abyss-deep—imploring look. I understood him; and then his head fell on his drum.

"Monsieur le Grand never beat a drum again in this life. Nor did his drum ever more utter sound. It should serve no foe of freedom for a slavish tattoo. I had very well understood the last imploring look of Le Grand. I drew the sword from my cane and thrust it through the drum at once."

PENITENCIA

CHAPTER I.

"Morgen muss ich fort von hier,
Und muss Abschied nehmen."
—Altes Lied.

The clank of spurs fell on the listener's ear, and she cast a furtive look out of the window. Two figures were crossing the parade-ground, but neither was the form for which she had been watching.

One was Major Wharton, militaire in looks and bearing, grizzled, florid, sharp of eye. The other, whose uniform and shoulder-straps designated him lieutenant, and whose sash, crossing the breast from the right shoulder to the left hip, proclaimed him officer of the day, was senior lieutenant of B Troop, Captain Cushing's Company. His head was bowed and his eyes bent to the ground, or we should have seen that they were quiet and determined in expression, with a shadow of regret lying in their dark-grey depths.

He towered half a head above his commanding officer, and his carriage was soldierly though not elegant. Thick, short-cut, reddish-brown hair and a heavy mustache of the same color did not add to his beauty, though it finished the look of character that distinguished him.

The woman who watched gave but one look, then swiftly retreated from the window. It was evident she did not want to be seen any more than the others wanted to see her, and the wave of red that had covered her face a moment, swept by without being seen by any eye. But

a few minutes had passed, however, till she crept to the window again, and this time her expectations were realized—more than realized, if any one might judge from the quick gesture with which she threw up her clasped hands, only to let them drop again as in despair.

"Under guard!" she said below her breath. "Then the sentence is dismissal from service and 'Guilty as charged.'"

These two figures had now reached Captain Cushing's quarters, and while the soldier saluted his superior, the captain entered the room, to meet the blazing eyes and contemptuous frown of his wife. He shrank within himself and tried to set his soft, round chin and irresolute mouth into firmer folds.

"The court-martial has closed its sessions, I see; and you know in advance what the sentence will be?" she asked, while her quivering nostrils belied the unnaturally quiet tone of her voice.

Her husband had not succeeded in nerving himself for the struggle, and he blurted out like a school-boy, whipped and defiant:

"Cashiered, by G—d, as I knew I should be, the moment I saw the fellows of the 108th come into camp and with young Richards as judge advocate. They all hate me, and I knew they would crowd me into a corner and jump on me."

"It is not true!" she cried indignantly, "every officer on the detail was friendly to you, and would have acquitted you of every charge if it had been possible."

He had sunk into a seat and seemed ready to give way to a burst of anguish.

"Geraldine," he entreated, "the sentence, you know, goes to the War Department first. Your father had so many friends in Washington—"

She did not let him finish the sentence. "None of them will intercede for a forger, a falsifier of records, depend on it; and I would not ask them." She drew herself up, a queenly figure, dark eyes flashing under clear-marked brows, a mass of blue-black hair resting like a coronet on her well-poised head. At her refusal the ruffian-element asserted itself in the quaking creature before her, and with a coarse oath he laughed bitterly:

"You were h—l bent on marrying an army officer, and you got him."

"My father's daughter might have expected at least to marry a gentleman," she flung back at him tempestuously. "Poverty I would have shared with you; misfortune I would have helped you to overcome, but disgrace you must bear alone as best you can."

Turning sharply she swept out of the room, snatched up a hat and hurried along the row till she reached the quarters of Major Wharton, who rose quickly on her approach and threw wide the door to admit her.

"My poor child," he said gently, "come let me take you to Mrs. Wharton."

"No, no!" she implored, "not now, Major; you know I cannot bear to be pitied. I want to speak to no one but you of this disgraceful affair; help me, I beg of you, to get away from here before the sentence comes back from Washington, approved."

"Where will you go? What will you do? Are you not again acting hastily? Your father is dead——"

"Thank God he didn't live till now," she murmured. Then she broke out passionately, "Am I to wait till Randall is drummed out of camp? I know him now and will not take that risk. No; let me go tomorrow, at daybreak, before the other ladies are astir. My plans are made. I go to California, to Cousin Ella, and from her house to any place where I can earn a living for myself."

"Has it come to that?" asked the Major in surprise. "Has Cushing run through with everything?"

"Lost it at the gaming table before we left Washington," she affirmed quietly.

"How fortunate that you are so immensely clever," the Major said, after a moment's pause. "You can turn your musical talent to account now, or you can teach languages or drawing and painting. Your father was so proud of your talents and accomplishments."

"But he never dreamed that I should have to seek a livelihood by them," she interrupted bitterly.

"It will not be so hard for you in Los Angeles, where there are still friends of your father's," the Major said soothingly.

"Ella is no longer there; they have removed farther north."

"Then you will find at least her and her good husband in a new place," continued the kindly old man, determined to place things in the best possible light for her.

The notes of the bugle came gaily in the window at this moment, sounding garrison signal; and directly a merry, rollicking drum or two joined in the call. The stamping and whinnying of horses struck into the clamor, and then the sharp, short order of some sergeant

seemed to direct affairs to their proper routine and settlement.

Once more the tall lieutenant, with the sash across his breast, passed over the parade ground; but perhaps Geraldine had not seen him, for her hands were clasped to her face.

"For the last time," she said sadly, "tomorrow I shall be far away, and never again will I hear drum or bugle—never again mount Black Prince for a gallop over the plain. What will become of the horse? Do not leave him in Cushing's hands—he will beat him to death out of hatred for me!" Her fortitude gave away at last and she sobbed aloud.

"Why not let me sell him to Winstead before you go?" asked the Major; and with a startled look in the direction where the tall lieutenant had passed out of sight, she answered, hastily:

"Let him try the horse tomorrow on the scout which his troop is to make; but let me now know that I will be on my way to the railroad before they return."

"So be it," the Major agreed, and then the details were settled for the morrow, upon which she was to leave Fort Hardinge and the army.

Before the ambulance, which was to bear her off, drew up at the quarters, Geraldine had seen B Troop, with Lieutenant Winstead on Black Prince, start out on the scout. She was already in traveling costume, and she drew down her veil as if he could have seen the tear-stained face at this distance. Tierney, the driver of the ambulance, had orders to stop at Major Wharton's quarters. While Mrs. Wharton hastened out to embrace Geraldine and comfort her, Mammy Kedgwick, a contra-

band relic of the Civil War—which had not long been over at this time—stowed away a number of bundles and packages under Tierney's direction, in the ambulance.

The other ladies had all sent the most loving message, and poor Geraldine sobbed out her thanks that they had not come to look upon her in her grief. Alas! She, the imperious, self-willed, but warm-hearted beauty of the little frontier garrison, to pass thus from the scene of her triumphs and her happiness. Then the ambulance, drawn by six stout mules, dashed off as lightly as though the heaviest heart under the morning sun had not been its burden. As they passed out of the post, Geraldine saw how well the Major had provided for her safety—an escort of twelve mounted men would conduct her to the nearest railway depot.

An early halt was made that evening at a little Government station, kept, as usual, by a discharged soldier, and she still had the same sense of safety, of exclusiveness, perhaps, which seems to exist within the circle drawn by an invisible cordon around Uncle Sam's army and every one belonging to it. But next day, when the line of the railroad was reached, and the train came rumbling up, Geraldine realized that she was alone in the world, and no longer "of the army." She kept up a brave front, though, and when the sergeant saluted as she stepped from the ambulance to board the train, she spoke with her steadiest voice.

"Present my compliments to Mrs. Wharton and the other ladies, when you return to the post, sergeant; and I thank you and your men for all your kindness and attention on the journey."

Then she sat through the next hours as in a dream, and when she knew that stable call, water call, feed call had gone, she looked out over the desolate landscape, with so hopeless a face that the conductor, thinking to cheer a homesick traveler, attempted to point out some object of interest to her. The unconscious mingling of bewilderment and resentment which her face suddenly expressed, induced him to forego his benevolent intention, and he allowed her to remain in her intrenchment of solitary hauteur for the rest of the trip.

CHAPTER II.

"Jaehes Hoffen—das immer immer,
Schluchzend erstirbt in der Thranen Thau."
—Resa.

The little inland city to which Cousin Ella had moved, was known, late in the sixties and early in the seventies, to the pleasure-loving element, consisting of opulent Americans, who followed in the footsteps of the vanishing Spaniard, so far as love for sumptuous feasts, fine horses, and general enjoyment was concerned. Business was left to those who had still their way and their dollars to make; the wealthy class lived simply to enjoy what no other State in the Union offered; cloudless, balmy days in the depths of winter, landscapes in which the wonderful and the beautiful were strangely blended, and where there were verdure and fragrance from the valley to the seacoast, at all seasons.

A picnic had been arranged in honor of Geraldine's arrival, though, truth to tell, she was in anything rather than festive mood. The most intimate friend of Cousin Tom, a Mr. Hollis, who drove the finest team in the whole procession, had been entrusted with the guest of honor, partly, perhaps, because he claimed this concession as being the eldest among the men. The dapple-grays he drove had been reared on his ranch, where many fine horses were bred. Not that the Hollis' lived on this ranch of theirs, however. Not by any means; he lived anywhere and everywhere; she lived all the year in Paris, and their friends said they lived very happily apart.

Ella and her jolly husband had charged Mr. Hollis to do all he could to rouse "poor Jerry" up to something like life—she was so dreadfully unhappy and homesick. She did indeed look pale and sad, but her face brightened as she watched the dapple grays. Her companion in the meantime watched her.

"You are fond of horses, Mrs. Cushing?"

"Am I?" she asked in reply; " did we not belong to the cavalry?" Then her face fell, as she heaved a weary sigh.

"Are you still homesick for that desolate frontier outpost on the bleak, dreary windswept plain?" he asked.

She was up and in arms at once. "But it is not dreary anywhere, when you are in the army; it is lonely and desolate here, though. How can it be lonesome at the smallest frontier post with the call of the bugle, the beating of the drum and the tramp of soldiers all day long. If I had been offered a fortune to quit all I held dear in life, I should have rejected it; and now—now I must live all my days among uncongenial surroundings, to earn just my daily bread."

"Poor child." He said it with deeper compassion than perhaps he had ever felt before, but it was well she did not see the dangerous warmth that crept into the usually cold eyes of the man beside her.

"Surely Ella and Tom are kind to you, are they not?" he asked.

"Kind!" she echoed. "They are self-forgetful in their kindness and I often wish they were harsh to me, so that I might fly into one of my fits of passion and forget my misery a little while."

"In other words," he put in, smiling, "the greatest kindness one could show you now, would be unkindness."

"Exactly," she laughed. "Come to think of it, though, I got, the other day, what I asked for. At my request Ella has told her friends of my desire to obtain pupils, or a position in some school; and Mrs. Bingham, who once lived in Los Angeles, called the other day, and I was introduced. She eyed me all over, and then said condescendingly: "This is the one that is looking for pupils; it is?" Of course, we all know she was once a wash-woman, but she has money now. Without wincing, I replied that I could teach music, drawing or the languages, and Mrs. Bingham went on to say that she understood we had once lived in Los Angeles, in the neighborhood of the old Cathedral, but she thought no really nice people had ever lived there. I said that retired army officers were glad to live anywhere outside of the poor house, and before I could draw breath again she asked me to play something for her. Chopin's Nocturne was on the piano, and you can fancy how I played it with my shaking fingers; and I did not dispute her opinion when she said it was evident that my taste in music had grown a little rusty. Perhaps Uncle Sam did not furnish army ladies with pianos, she said, and I answered that the quartermaster department objected to sending out costly instruments to any post beyond the Raton Mountains, as they could not well be packed on mule-back, and that was the only means of transportation now."

Mr. Hollis laughed. "Mrs. Bingham is coming here today; will there be a renewal of hostilities?"

"Quien sabe? I am always ready for a brush with the enemy. My father used to say, 'Jerry is a soldier's child'; and to thank poor papa, I learned to play 'Soldaten-Kind' for him on the piano, as soon as I was old enough to appreciate his defense of my shortcomings and my failings of temper."

As the dapple grays had made several little detours, the arrangements for lunch were well under way when they reached the picnic grounds. The younger ladies, the working bees, as Mr. Hollis styled them, were all busy, and some had already blackened fingers and heated faces to show for their work; while some of the gentlemen were charged with having used profanity when the cork-screw would not work with the promptness and celerity inherent in this little instrument when manipulated by Californian fingers.

Geraldine, as guest of honor, was not classed with the working bees, so the severity of her plain black dress was not even relieved by a little apron. But "poor Jerry" felt as grand in her simple frock as did Mrs. Bingham in her fashion-plate apparel; and Mr. Hollis knew that there would be a renewal of hostilities when he caught the sniff of disdain with which Mrs. Bingham allowed a platter of sandwiches to pass, from which Geraldine had selected one spread with cold ham.

"I am surprised to see Mrs. Cushing ready to eat a plain ham sandwich," she snickered in her unpleasantly nasal tones. "For I thought army belles lived on ice cream and caramels only."

"Dainty creatures—" assented Geraldine, laughingly. "No," she continued with sudden inspiration, "it's very

little ice cream they get, though an occasional box of caramels does reach us."

"Perhaps the quartermaster does not furnish ice cream when it has to be packed on mule-back over the mountain passes," the other lady observed loftily.

"It is not the quartermaster's business at all," said Jerry, looking wise and sober, "but the commissary trains that are sent out to the frontier posts with these delicacies, are regularly waylaid at Fort Riley, and the commanding officer there as regularly confiscates the ice cream under the shabby excuse that the hospital steward needs it for the sick soldiers. So that army belles are glad enough to get bacon and hard tack to eat, though to be sure, the bacon is much finer than the richest people could buy outside the army." And the little, milk-white teeth dug themselves into the despised ham sandwich with much apparent relish, while Cousin Ella quickly found some other topic of conversation.

There was much animation displayed in a friendly contest over the absorption of the largest quantity of lunch, and while the younger ladies refilled coffee cups, the gentlemen were re-enforced as to bottles by the most experienced of their number. And while ladies were flitting back and forth, the gentlemen rising and subsiding, no one noticed that Mrs. Cushing had left the circle. Cousin Ella alone missed her, and she tried vainly to catch her husband's eye, but Tom Borden, the thumb of one hand in the armhole of his vest, was holding his wine glass up before his eye with the other, and she knew that if she aimed a bread-ball at him, he would ask out aloud: "What is it, dear?"

Her eyes wandered around the board till Mr. Hollis' met and held them. He understood her appeal, slowly arose and while wandering away deliberately lighted a cigar, which he threw away as quick as he got out of sight of preying eyes. Then he made his way to where he heard a little stream purling and singing on its way over the rocky bed, and he had not long to look for the object of his search. In an attitude by no means expressing triumph or defiance, with bowed head laid against a rock, and arms clasped above it, it was rather the pose of a Magdalen, in which he found her. He had an opportunity of studying the lines of the motionless form, and the beauty of the head with its wealth of dusk hair, dressed low in the neck today, in a heavy, wavy coil. The whole shape was mirrored in a clear pool, and Mr. Hollis, anxious to obey Cousin Ella's unspoken behest, to bring Jerry back at once, made a little pebble to crunch under his foot, so that Geraldine believed he had only just come. She raised her head and looked at him with startled eyes.

"What?" laughed Hollis, "in an attitude of penitence and regret after having routed the enemy with eclat."

"The attitude in which the rest of my days will be spent, then." The light and sparkle had gone out of her eyes and her face was pale.

"And you have left the gay world as represented by the picnic crowd, to enter on this life of penitence at once, here where the waters of the Penitencia flow."

"Is that the name of this little stream?" she asked.

"Yes," he assented, glad to have roused her from her apathy, "it is one of the pretty Spanish names found all through this country."

And before he knew what she was about, she had stooped to dip up the water from the pool at her feet, and throwing the silver spray over head and breast and shoulders, she repeated the name.

"Penitencia!" she cried, "Penitencia—this, then, shall be my name henceforth and forever." All my life has been made up of hasty actions and bitter repentance, of regret for what might have been, and hopeless longing for what could never be; and my portion for all time to come will be only what my new name speaks of—Penitencia!"

Mr. Hollis had seized her arm. "You are beside yourself, Geraldine; why do you allow so small a reptile as that malicious woman to sting you into madness? Go back to Ella, at once, she is uneasy about you, as I was too; for you are wayward, Geraldine, and I am sufficiently your friend to tell you so."

It was only a day or two after the picnic that Tom Borden came home with a letter postmarked Fort Hardinge. How her eyes lighted up with a sudden hope, and how wan her face grew when Tom said it was from Major Wharton, who wrote in regard to papers to be served on Captain Cushing at the post. He assured Mrs. Cushing that she need have no fear of trouble from Randal.

"What else does he write?" she asked, and Tom handed her the letter to read, which she soon laid aside, trying to hide her disappointment from herself.

Then she told Cousin Ella that she thought it safe now to go to San Francisco and look for a position at some school, since it was not likely that Randal would contest her suit for divorce.

"Will you get a divorce, really, Jerry?" asked Cousin Ella.

"I have no sentimental scruples on the subject," replied Geraldine in a tone that was not pleasant to hear. "There is no law on earth that can prevent me from getting a divorce."

"None on earth," her cousin admitted a little sadly.

She soon found a school in San Francisco; little Madam Britzka was happy in the acquisition of this new instructor to complete her staff. Mrs. Cushing had come highly recommended, had passed her examination with credit, and soon became the idol of her pupils, who raved over her great black eyes as every lieutenant fresh from West Point had always done. Madame Britzka was pleased with the "air noble" that environed the new teacher; and Geraldine found residence at a boarding house where fashion was somewhat tempered with comfort. No one became nearer acquainted with her than to notice her entrance to the common dining hall, garbed always in plainest black, her hair dressed high on her head, as severely classic in looks as she was distant in manner. They thought her proud and arrogant, but she was only heart-broken and unhappy. Aimlessly she wandered through the far-out quiet streets, after school hours, and when the fog hung like a pall, and the wind drove sand, and dust, and pebbles into her eyes, she said bitterly: "The bleak, dreary, windswept plains, indeed. God—let me go back to them or let me die!"

One morning Madame Britzka broke into the class room with an important air. "You have visitors in the reception room, Mrs. Cushing," she announced, "two gen-

tlemen, militare—oooh!" and she straightened her back and curled long fierce mustachios.

Geraldine's eyes grew bright and a sudden glow came into her face as Madame Britzka took the book from her hands to take her place. Her heart throbbed wildly as she approached the room, and then stood still as she crossed the threshold and took Major Wharton's outstretched hand.

It was well that Mrs. Wharton was not there, for women can read a woman's emotion; but Geraldine was really glad to see the Major, and she greeted Mr. Humphreys, the junior lieutenant of B Troop, with effusion. But in her heart there was a great cry, for a sudden hope had sprung up there only to be swept away again.

The Major congratulated her on being so pleasantly situated, and went on to say that he was on a tour of inspection of the different posts in the Department of the Pacific, Mrs. Wharton had remained in Washington, where he had been ordered to report first. Winstead was to have acted as his aid, but just before leaving, his promotion to the captaincy of B Troop had come out, and he had to remain at Fort Hardinge with his company.

When she reached her boarding house in the evening a positive horror seized her, and she hesitated, with her foot on the marble step, as if it were a prison she was about to enter. She dragged herself wearily through the long hall and up to her room, and no one heeded her absence from the dinner table or made comments on her non-presence at breakfast; Mrs. Cushing was so eccentric. But poor Geraldine passed a long night on the floor beside her bed, her head hidden, and weeping fit to break her heart.

Weary and desolate she took up the burden of life again on the morrow, a burden to which were added the little pitiful cares now, for gloves, and dresses and shoes, which she sorely needed, for her black clothing had grown shabby. She had rented a grand piano for her room, and after buying what music she wanted, there was little left to buy clothes with.

It was on a Saturday morning that the hall boy tapped at her door to say a gentleman was waiting for her in the parlor. Again that wild hope surged up in her heart; to die as suddenly when Mr. Hollis rose to greet her.

"You!" She said it so coldly and contemptuously that he drew back in anger.

"You were looking for some one else?" he asked.

"Yes," she answered with savage frankness.

"And it was a bitter disappointment to find me instead of him?"

"It was," she said disdainfully.

"You are the quintessence of candor and frankness, Mrs. Cushing," he took up his gloves which he had laid aside with his hat.

She swept him a courtesy.

"I have received compliments on that score all my life long," she replied laughing, and her mood changed at a stroke. "Come, let me play for you; but if my taste in music should seem a little rusty to you, remember it is the fault of this old rattle-trap. I have rented a good instrument for my own use, but it is in my room up-stairs."

Mr. Hollis was charmed; he was fond of music, though not of the Ben Bolt style, and when Geraldine closed the piano she had her reward for her amiability. After hav-

ing delivered kind messages from Tom and Ella, he announced that he had brought two of his finest saddle horses to San Francisco, and if Mrs. Cushing would ride with him for an hour that afternoon, his groom would have the horses at the door by 4 o'clock.

"You have brought your habit with you, I'll be bound," he added.

"It may be like my taste in music, a little rusty," she laughed, "but it is in my trunk, sure enough, though I did not think I would ever have use for it again."

CHAPTER III.

"Am liebsten mocht ich sterben,
Dann war's auf ein mal still."
—Uhland.

It was not the last ride they took together. Something of the old light came back into Geraldine's eyes, something of the former color into her cheeks, when she was on her horse. There was something both tender and joyful about her, during these rides, that brought her nearer to this man Hollis than she had realized at first; these were the only bright hours in her now dreary existence, and she enjoyed them with mingled bitterness and pleasure. Often, on her return to her solitary apartment at her boarding house, she would throw aside hat and habit with the determination never to see Mr. Hollis and his horses again; but with a sneer at herself she would ask: "Who cares?"

One other Saturday she had returned from her ride, and while Mr. Hollis was giving some direction to the groom, Geraldine entered the vestibule, where two children were at play. She had often noticed the cherub-like beauty of the little, toddling boy, and she stopped today for the first time to speak to him. He held out both his fat fists to her, but as she stooped over to kiss him, the eight-year-old sister in charge, pulled him hastily aside.

"Come away, Freddy," she exclaimed most ungraciously, and then with a disparaging look at Geraldine's old black habit, added in explanation: "Mamma says she don't think you're very 'spectable nohow, 'cause you ain't hardly got no good clothes to wear."

"Your mamma is perfectly correct, in premises and conclusion; and you may take that for your information," and she laid her whip across the young one's shoulder to such good purpose that a howl from the girl and terrified cries from the boy filled the hall with discord.

In an instant Mr. Hollis was beside her. "What have you done?" he asked in vexed tones.

"I have burned my ships behind me," was the reckless reply, but her flaming cheeks grew white as snow.

"Go to your room, instantly," said Mr. Hollis in his quick, determined way, for doors were opened in every direction, and hurried footsteps flew along the stairs. He drew his watch. "In half an hour, to the minute, there will be a carriage at the door; you can stay here no longer." And he turned to go, without the ceremony of farewell.

Late that evening, after dinner, Mr. Hollis called at the Blank Hotel and sent up his card to Mrs. Cushing. When the lady had signified her pleasure to receive the visitor, one of the older servants preceded him to Mrs. Cushing's apartments, threw open the door and retired, bowing.

It was a very pretty picture that presented itself to the gentleman's view—a large, handsome, brilliantly-lighted room; and the figure just stepping out from the curtained arch of a window recess, seemed the proper occupant for the place. In evening dress of pale pink, yellow tea roses in her black hair and lying on her black hair and lying on her snowy bosom, Geraldine was beautiful as he had never dreamed she was.

"Superb!" He could not repress the exclamation, but warned by the quick contraction of her brow, he added quickly, "I had no idea that tea roses grew to such perfection anywhere but in the hot interior of California."

Geraldine's eyes sparkled as she turned to the mantleshelf and exclaimed:

"Here are more of them; he must have plundered the entire country at your behest. They are beautiful, and so delicately fragrant."

"You like my choice of roses, then?" he asked. "And did I select the rooms you like, or is my taste a little rusty, in this direction."

"On the contrary, you must possess Aladdin's lamp, else how could everything be complete, even to the piano when you had hardly an hour for your task."

"In San Francisco," he replied, "I find that twenty-dollar pieces form a very good substitute for Aladdin's lamp. And since you approve of my taste in furnishings, allow me to say that your taste in dress has not grown rusty. Was this in the trunk with the despised riding habit?"

"It was. You must bear in mind that Fort Hardinge was a three-company post, and there was assembly occasionally, which was not called together by the bugle. There were more elegant dresses there than mine, though I was belle at the post for two seasons."

It was delightful to see her face now, animated and rosy, with no trace left of the storm that had swept over it, earlier in the day. If the genial mood would only last, thought her listener.

She rang for tea after a while, and Mr. Hollis enjoyed the air of home which the apartment wore and which

Geraldine's presence seemed to shed over it. Then she opened the piano and in a spirit of mischief she played the Nocturne which Mrs. Bingham had condemned as too slow; and later, when she sang, he lost himself in dreams as a lovelorn youth might have done. But he aroused himself to think of the fiery temper, of the ungovernable spirit which even he, with his many millions could not subdue, and which he stood in constant dread of.

She whirled around on the music stool laughing and gleeful, when he applauded her song, and she turned to the key-board once more and grew quickly absorbed in her play. Then a look came into her face that puzzled him, and when the last chords died slowly away she closed the instrument and walked across the room.

"A 'mighty martial strain' was in that music," he said in honest admiration. "What is the name of the march."

"Soldaten-Kind," she made answer, looking away from him, into the broad mirror on the mantle by which she was standing.

"You play Liszt, Schubert and Wagner, too. What is your favorite music, though?"

"The fife and drum and the bugle. I'd gladly die to have the fife and drum play at my funeral as they play at the funeral of the poorest soldier in the ranks." And flinging up her hands with the gesture of despair that seemed to be out of place in that glittering surrounding, she dropped her face on the cold, white marble of the mantle and burst into a passion of tears.

So the storm had broken, and he knew how fiercely the tempest would rage. He felt guilty standing there and watching her in her wild anguish; he deemed it

wiser, too, to vanish from the scene, and he left her, as he had done earlier in the day without the ceremony of farewell.

* * * *

The season at Santa Cruz had fairly opened, and the beach was gay with groups of chattering, laughing people, who watched the actions and antics of the other people who were in the surf. Geraldine was with neither of these, but sat apart from the throng. Though she had not yet been in the surf this morning, she was already known as a brave swimmer on the beach, for she was reckless, to the horror of the swimming masters.

Since the day she left the boarding house, where her shabby clothes had been sneered at, she had not known the lack of fine apparel, and even her bathing dress was made of corded silk. But Geraldine had never been inordinately fond of dress, and she looked none the happier in her silk attire.

Her bare arm was resting on the log beside which she was reclining, and her face was turned full to the sea, upon which the great, sad eyes rested. As the surf came in with its irresistible power and its hoarse roll of thunder, she wanted to shout out under the wild uproar—

"Break—break—break!
On thy cold grey rocks, O sea——"

But when the waves retreated with their musical splash, they sang back to her in little tremulous ripples:

"For the tender grace of a day that is dead,
Will never come back to me."

It grew maddening at last—always the same song: the very waves seemed to mock her, and she would listen to it

no longer. There was so strange a fascination in it though, that she could not leave, and she heard nothing but what the waves said; she did not hear the quick, regular footsteps approaching, and not till a shadow fell upon her did she look up. A pair of dark eyes were gazing at her, and warm, strong hands were stretched out to her. A sudden joy transfigured all her being.

"Winstead," she said, as she drew him down beside her.

"Mrs. Borden frightened me so; she said you would not come to her, but had gone to the seashore for your shattered nerves. But you do not look sick—you are handsome as ever—" his very heart was in his eyes.

"And you," she said in low, tender tones, "look just as I have seen you in my dreams, a hundred times."

"Then I may hope, Geraldine, for you know why I have come."

She flung his hand from her as her face grew ashen, and she rose from his side with a bound. Why did she stand so still, the man was wondering? Was she listening to the discordant cries of the sea-mew that seemed suddenly to hover close around them.

"Geraldine," he said, but she interupted him with a quick laugh.

"But that is not my name now," she made answer, "my name is Penitencia."

"Penitencia!". She had drawn a folded paper from the belt of her dress, which she gave him. "It is a letter that reached me this morning," she went on; "it will explain why I changed my name. While you read I will take my last swim in the surf."

He was dazed and undetermined, but she stamped her

foot in the old imperious manner. "Read, I tell you, read," she repeated, and he mechanically unfolded the paper, while she made her way lightly to the water's edge.

Then he read the letter, once, twice, as in a nightmare, and with a cry he started to read again. But the cry seemed to be taken up by a thousand voices, and when he looked up he saw a great concourse of people gathered just where he had seen Geraldine last; and running forward he saw both swimming masters far out in the surf. The instinct of the soldier, to rescue and aid, were strong within Hugh Winstead, and he threw off his coat and boots almost without knowing it. But not till he met one of the swimming masters struggling back to the shore with a lifeless body hanging limp on his arm, did he know whom he had vainly tried to save.

In the old cemetery, not far away, they made her grave, and on the cross that marked it, was but the one word—

PENITENCIA.

"But, Gregoria—"

"Ciertamente, mi querida."

"I am going out walking—"

"Si, senora."

"And alone!"

"Yes, my lady."

And with each affirmative pronounced by the maid, the mistress grew more confident of her own defeat. Gregoria, after conscientiously fastening the last button in the elegant walking boots, surveyed with a look of pride the pretty little feet resting on the velvet cushion; while the eyes of her mistress roved slowly around the room, much as a bird might look about him in his gilded cage.

"Tell me your dream again, querida," urged the attendant spirit, in a coaxing voice, passing her hands lovingly over the feet of the lady before rising from her kneeling posture. "You can not go walk this morning because your new bonnet no come home. Meeses Milliner forget, my lady," she continued.

Gregoria had been taken to Washington by Mrs. Colonel Graham, when the Colonel had been ordered from his post in New Mexico to appear before the Retiring Board, very much against his will, for he wore only the silver leaf of the lieutenant-colonel on his shoulder, and naturally preferred to be retired on colonel's pay. Gregoria, a Mexican, the daughter of parents who had been killed by the Apaches before Colonel Graham could

rescue them, was no mean adept at playing lady's maid when she grew up; and while in Washington acquired not only great skill in hair-dressing and the finer branches, but learned from the maid of Lady Arbuthnot, a friend of her mistress, the fashion of addressing her, too, as she heard "my lady" addressed by her maid, to the great amusement of the two ladies. Her present mistress, the orphaned daughter of Colonel Graham—and who had grown up, one might say, on the back of the sturdy, dark-visaged Mexican—had never been so addressed by her until after her marriage to the millionaire-merchant, by whose name, Watson, Gregoria could not be made to call her mistress, for the Colonel was dead, and there was no one here who wore uniform or of whom the girl stood in awe. She had tyrannized over her little mistress from the time she was brought half dead, thrown across a trooper's saddle, into Fort Craig; and she still wielded her scepter over her, though she would have laid down her life for her willingly, then as now.

The eyes of the mistress—beautiful eyes of golden brown, with a wistful, longing look in them that was pathetic to behold—had strayed out through the window into the bright sunshine, which had inspired her with the desire for a solitary ramble through the crowded streets of the city that morning.

"I have been thinking what a strange dream it was," said the lady thoughtfully; "and if I were as superstitious as you, Gregoria, I should try to find some meaning in it. But I did not dream about myself; that is the only queer thing about it. I saw and knew all these things, but they did not happen to me. Even the walk through the strange thoroughfares—I saw them all and would

recognize them; but it was not I that walked there. I see again the steep, narrow street which led out of a busy thoroughfare—not any of the streets I have ever passed through, but a street far remote from Kearny, Market or Montgomery Street, teeming with life, but not the life of these other streets. The little, narrow street was perfectly clean, with planked sidewalks and planked driveways; but no vehicles could travel above the first street that intersected it, and there were steps on the sidewalk that one ascended in order to reach the street next above. But the two corner stores, just before the rise began, were particularly noticeable; the one was a grocery store, small but well kept, and many people were going in and out, and everything seemed cheerful and thriving. The other corner—the right hand corner as you went up, looked entirely different. This, too, was a one-story house, but the storeroom stood empty. It had been a small florist establishment, for there were still remnants of the wire frames for floral designs, and one or two broken baskets on the counter; and in the little show window there stood, half withered, a bouquet which had evidently been made for a grave decoration. The flowers looked so neglected and forgotten that they made an inexpressibly sad impression—particularly as the place adjoining this little florist shop was an undertaking establishment, and it fronted on a wider street, of which I saw nothing farther in my dream."

"After ascending the five or six steps in the sidewalk that led to the higher lying street, one was quite agreeably surprised by the broad, quiet terrace that one stepped on to. Opposite to the end of the little narrow

street—for it did end here—stood a new-looking house of three stories, with a wide entrance door, and a number of signs on either side of the door."

"What they say, querida?" asked Gregoria, impatiently, when her mistress, with closed eyes, leaned back in her chair.

"I am trying to remember," she answered with an effort. "Yes—I see it now. There was one sign that read: 'Finely furnished room for offices or housekeeping'; another bore the name of a doctor; and a dressmaker's sign was there; two or three teachers of languages, and a dancing-master. Just opposite to the entrance door was a wide staircase, clean, well-kept and carpeted, with brightly polished banisters, leading up to the second story. Reaching the head of the stairs there was a door just across the hall; a dark-colored, handsome door with elaborate lock and door-knob, and when it opened one looked right straight at the only window in this large, high-ceiled room. From this window could be seen trees in the garden below—it was on the edge of town—and the house had not been long built. Between the door and the window, in the center of the room, stood a large, square table, dark-colored, too, and brightly polished. There had been a cover, or rug, on the table; but some one had snatched it off hastily to throw it over a couch that stood against the wall near the table. Or rather to throw it over the man who lay on this couch—dead; over his head and face and chest. But one hand, white, with long, slender fingers, was visible, and it held a paper with something written on it." Again she paused, with her eyes closed; was she trying

to read what was traced on the paper? But her maid broke the silence.

"How he look? You see his dress?

"I did not see him," her mistress protested. "I did not dream that I was there. But the man was tall, and he was dressed in a full suit of canvas—the dark brown duck clothes they wear when they go hunting or fishing. The feet were narrow and well shaped and covered with fine boots, not shoes. Near the couch, her back to the door, her face to the window, stood a woman, looking intently at the form on the couch, and clasping her hands in mute agony. But she did not belong there; she was in walking dress. She wore a light wrap of some kind, and on her head was a dark bonnet with a bright yellow rose. When the woman turned and went down over the broad staircase there were two people hiding under its shadow, and a woman was trying to smother her sobs, while the man whispered brokenly, 'He told me to come at ten o'clock this morning, but make no sign till eleven, no matter what I might see.'"

"And you want go out walking, alone, after such a vision, my lady?" asked Gregoria in horror.

Mistress and maid had both become so absorbed in the recital of the weird dream that they were quite startled by a low tap on the door. James announced, "The Misses Starr," and without awaiting an order Gregoria rushed downstairs to show up the young ladies personally, glad of the pleasant interruption to their gloomy fancies.

Most affectionately were the two young ladies greeted by their somewhat older friend. Their father, Colonel Starr, had been a classmate of her own father at West

Point, and having been retired from active service had chosen San Francisco for his residence. When Gregoria had relieved the young ladies of their wraps, they looked around the room for some new addition to its really tasteful and artistic furnishing, but discovered only a slender cut-glass vase, small but costly, on the beautifully inlaid escritoire, which in one breath both girls pronounced lovely. Their mother, too, had once given her opinion in regard to some of the art treasures in the little boudoir. The millionaire-husband, having purchased two paintings for this room, wanted the lady to say what she thought of them—one a scene from "Othello," where Desdemona listens in wrapt attention to the recital of the hair-breadth 'scapes of the dusky hero; the other a Madonna by Defregger, the Madonna of Consolation. With a keen appreciation of the eternal fitness of things the lady had decided, with a slight emphasis on the possessive pronoun, "Very appropriate—for your wife's room."

There was new music to be tried. Gregoria had already opened the piano and the sweet face of the hostess had gained a tinge of color and a touch of animation in the pleasure of entertaining her guests, when there came another tap at the door and the servant entered with a card.

"Shall be pleased, James. Come girls." She handed the card to Anna, the eldest, who, reading aloud:

"Major Sutton, Roy Carleton," ran lightly down the stairs, followed by her sister, Isabel.

Their hostess walked slowly after them, still and white, but with her heart a-flutter, a whirl of memories surging through her brain and a wild longing for her lost

youth and her short dream of bliss to come back. Roy Carleton! Ah me! She was a girl again, light-hearted and happy, dashing across the breezy plain, the handsome young officer by her side to be the one dearer to her than all the world else. How the horses bounded along under their light burden—neck and neck—till a strong, shapely hand could seize the slender fingers in the little gauntlet and arrest the speed of the horses, turning his own so that he could look into the animated face of the graceful girl on her milk-white steed. Oh, the freedom of the wide, wild plain, and the home-coming from the glorious rides! In an instant the luxury and stateliness of her grand house sank into oblivion, and the white shelter of the tent—the homely mud walls of adobe quarters—the dug-out—the barracks, rose up before her, alluring and enticing beyond expression. To be free—free—and by his side.

And then James held the door open and she stepped across the threshhold.

Major Sutton had taken possession of the two young girls. "Twin stars of beauty, bursting on my dazzled sight!" he exclaimed. "Come forward to the light, my dears, and let's count the new wrinkles you've got since I saw you last." And he drew them to the window at the other end of the room, where little indignant shrieks and ejaculations told of the critical examination going on there.

But she, who had crossed the threshold last, stood by the closed door a moment, speechless, and making a pitiful effort to gain control over herself.

"Roy!" was all her trembling lips could utter.

He bent over a little hand, cold as marble; and, hoarse with emotion, he murmured, "Eva—my love—my love!"

She drew her hand from his clasp. "I did not know of your coming, Roy; why did you come? It will kill me! Oh, if I had only died—long ago—before—before—"

"My poor child—God pity you! God pity us both! It was not well to barter you away for this man's gold; it was hard and cruel." He gazed at her with darkening eyes. "Sutton and I were ordered quite unexpectedly to report at the Presidio, and I could not rest till I had looked upon your face once more."

Major Sutton had finished his inspection; pronounced Anna's nose covered with freckles, on Isabel's forehead plain traces of toilet powder, and the two beginning to look like the hopeless old maids they soon would be—unless old Sutton married them.

"What—both?" they asked in one breath; and the old bachelor declared that he again stood before the difficulty that had always prevented him from getting married—they all wanted him, and he could marry only one.

Before the merriment had subsided there was happily a new incident to draw the attention of the company from Eva's pale face and the frowning brow of Captain Carleton. The door swung back and Gregoria's form appeared in the frame, and she announced with solemn dignity that madam was served with wine and "bissekqueet" in the little morning room. She was greeted with a peal of laughter, and the Major sprang forward to shake her by both hands.

"What, Gregoria, still in command here?"

To which the dusky household tyrant replied, in the sonorous voice of her race, "A brava soldier never aban-

done hees post," a sentiment the Major applauded, clapping his hands and nudging the Captain to do the same. But Gregoria had stepped up to greet El Capitan with the freedom she had always been granted, and inquired after old friends in his troop.

"Did you make Morton a Sergeant, Teniente?" she asked. She had known the Captain when he was but junior lieutenant and she dropped back into the old form of address.

"Morton does not want to be made Sergeant; they are not all proud, like yourself, Gregoria," the Major answered in Roy's place.

"Morton is my orderly and is here with me," the Captain informed her; "he, too, will come to see you, I am sure, Gregoria."

Morton was the soldier whom Captain—then Lieutenant—Carleton had carried out of range of Apache arrows when they had been ambushed on a scout at one time. Morton's horse had been shot under him, the trooper's leg broken in the fall, making him helpless. In stooping over him, the young officer had been struck on the side of the face by a glancing ball, which had left its mark without detriment to the good looks of the stripling. Morton, however, had been transferred and retransferred since then, from troop to troop, as his commander rose in rank, so as to be near the man to whom he owed his life.

They had adjourned to the cozy little apartment in which the wine and "bissekqueet" had been set forth, and Gregoria having banished all other servants, was careful that the guests should have no cause to complain of her attendance. Conversation never flagged; there

were passages at arms between Major Sutton and the two young girls; gay laughter and good-humored if not brilliant repartee. Before the hostess fairly realized the fact, she had been made to promise that she would chaperon a party to a theater performance two days hence, Mr. Watson to be of the party if he choose. There was a very good troupe at the "California" and whatever they played would be sure to be acceptable, so that the girls were in high glee, and Eva's approbation was so ably expressed by Gregoria that no one noticed her lady's silence.

At last the Major proposed that all three ladies come out for a promenade; but the hostess excused herself on the plea that she must remain to preside at her husband's luncheon. And while Gregoria attended the visitors to the door, noting with secret dread the set whiteness of the Captain's face, her mistress lay on her knees, her head buried in the brocade of the first chair she had reached in her boudoir, sobbing out the misery and despair she had kept in check while her friends were with her. For once the barriers were broken and the flood-gates opened, and Gregoria, who, to tell the truth was "peeking" through the key-hole, though the door was not locked, thought it best to put no restraint on her querida's passionate grief, but let her cry her sorrow out.

At the late lunch, at which Mr. Watson always expected to see his wife preside—since he was an early riser and took breakfast without her—Gregoria again was the only attendant, not because there were no other servants but because she had so ordered it. Gregoria's word was law, and although her rule sometimes galled

Mr. Watson, he knew he could never shake it off. He had tried it once, and she had simply said, "I go—My lady go, too," and the millionaire husband knew she meant it. Though perfectly respectful in her demeanor, especially before company, Gregoria had not the least fear of the man before her eyes. Why, he had not so much as a Sergeant's chevrons on his sleeve; so what did he amount to? He could not even put her into the guard-house, as Sergeant Cook had once done at the post in New Mexico. She had been a girl of twelve then, her querida five years younger, and she had constructed a little cart, with the aid of the Commissary Sergeant, to haul Eva around in, since she was too big to carry huck-a-puck. Her master had cautioned her once or twice not to come near the parade ground at guard-mount; but she had come thundering up with her little cart in spite of his warning, till the Colonel gave the Sergeant a pre-concerted signal one day and Gregoria was seized and ignobly carried off to the guard-house, which was only a tent at the time. But it was the guard-house all the same; and while Gregoria was inside howling like a pack of coyotes, but afraid to go near the canvas walls of the prison, Eva sat outside, at the back of the tent, crying fit to break her heart, and beating against the canvas with both little fists in rage and despair.

At luncheon, between the changing of the plates, the visitors of the morning were discussed; and although the dark, stealthy eyes of the master had directed a lowering glance at her mistress when Captain Carleton's name was mentioned, Gregoria, with an audacity which only she possessed, had followed up the news by the information that Mr. Watson would accompany her lady

to the play—her lady to wear the beautiful lavender silk with the pearls which the affectionate husband had lately presented to the wife. Mr. Watson was easily persuaded into giving his consent to everything Gregoria proposed. This luncheon hour, he knew from experience, could be made extremely pleasant, or just the reverse, by Gregoria. It was the only time when they were strictly en famille, for there was always company at dinner, and he liked to think that his lovely young wife enjoyed his company—while it lasted. At dinner, while the grand butler held sway, Gregoria was less oppressive; but at breakfast and lunch he was completely at her mercy.

Captain Carleton had sent a very pretty theater bouquet of lilies-of-the-valley for Mrs. Watson, while Major Sutton presented the two Misses Starr with pink and white camelias. The party attracted a great deal of attention at the play; the two young ladies were handsome and distinguished looking, the gentlemen with them were pronounced soldiers in spite of their black suits, and Mrs. Watson, pale and fragile looking, was—Mrs. Watson; while her husband was an object of note on account of his millions and his pretty wife.

Captain Carleton's eyes sought the face of the poor, rich man's wife more than once; lilies-of-the-valley were her flowers, as the stately camelia belonged to the young girls beside her. Infinitely more touching, to his mind, was the drooping little lily; but the world looks with greater admiration upon roses and camelias. The eyes of the husband, however, had spied the look that sought his wife's face, and the glowering, suspicious expression, that was natural to the man, grew deeper and harder as he watched the sensitive creature flush and pale beneath

his scrutiny. How he hated Roy Carleton from the very first! What business had he to come to his house—the costly cage he had built for the shy little bird he had bought—no, captured. If it were not for that cursed black Indian at home, with her devilish impudence and her fierce determination, he would make short work with that handsome Captain and all the rest of his wife's friends who clung to her for her father's sake—he said to himself. Oh, he could break and tame Eva easily enough if it were not for that hateful Mexican!

In the meantime the orchestra had given as overture Scheffel's "Trompeter von Sekkinger"—"Behut Dich Gott, es war so schon gewesen," and the Major turned to Mr. Watson with the grumbling remark:

"I'll bet you every last man in that band is a German; they are never so happy as when they can make people miserable with their doleful music."

And Roy Carleton had turned to Eva with a look that said: "Do you remember?" She did remember, for she asked: "Do you sing much now?"

The answer was low and only Eva's ears caught the words: "Never, since—"

Then the play progressed and every one was absorbed, or could pretend to be. But Eva would not stay for the last act; she said it made her nervous; and the intense pallor of her face made her statement convincing. Roy had been beside her for some time; she felt the jealous eyes of her husband on her and the lips of the soldier curled in bitter contempt.

"Othello in real life," he said, with a sneer; "a charming side play to Othello on the stage. Alas for Desde-

mona! 'I do mistrust thee, woman, and each word of thine.'"

"Roy," she pleaded with white lips, "do not be so cruel. Kill me. I will gladly die by your hand, but do not torture me."

And in defiance of the stealthy black eyes under the beetling brows, he looked long and tenderly into the death-sad face beside him. "It would take so little to kill you, poor Desdemona; and if we were both dead and in the same grave—"

"Even that can not be now," she said, drearily.

He laughed—a hard, desperate laugh. "You are mistaken in that; the church that sanctions your marriage tie says only, 'Till death do this twain part.' You would be mine after that—and for all eternity."

She looked helplessly into his handsome face.

"Be merciful, Roy," she implored; "do not make my life more wretched still."

Turning from her with a fierce effort at self-control, he said huskily, "Never again, poor child, never again shall you complain of my being cruel to you, for whom I would gladly lay down my life. Good night, love, and good-bye."

Mr. Watson was but too glad to accede to his wife's request to go home. Her expensive toilette had been sufficiently admired. He knew that nearly half a column would be devoted to descriptions and comments upon their party in the morning's paper, and he could sleep very soundly on this prospect.

Major Sutton alone called the next morning. The performance had been such a success that Othello would be produced again within the week. Captain Carleton, he

said, would call later to pay his devoirs. But he did not come; only Morton came a day later with a verbal message from the Captain, and a large bouquet of dark blue violets completely hooded in a white paper cover. Gregoria delivered the violets wrapped up as they were, and then descended with Morton to the lower regions; and while they talked over the days of "auld lang syne" we may be sure that he was treated to the best and choicest in the larder of the house of Watson.

When, the following morning, the mistress expressed her desire to be robed in her street dress, the maid asked, without a single objection, at what hour the carriage was to be ordered, upon which she was told that her lady was going out for a walk alone. The bonnet which had not been delivered on time, was now brought out—a very pretty creation of black lace, and objectionable to Gregoria only on account of the dark purple trimming. "You stop at Meeses Milliner, mi querida," she urged, "and mak her tak off the ugly purple feather. A peenk flower is much better."

Eva promised obedience, hastening with feverish impatience from the house, and stopping, undecidedly, on the white flags in front. Then with sudden determination, she walked briskly down the street, hesitating at the next corner and on the point of turning back. But she reached "Meeses Milliner" at last, told her to replace the despised feather with something that could be pinned on without removing the bonnet, and then became so absorbed in consulting her watch that she did not notice what the milliner submitted for her approval before pinning it on. When she left the establishment, she stopped a passing street car, and upon alighting from

it she found herself in a crowded thoroughfare, strange to her, and with a different life flowing through it from that of Kearny, Market or Montgomery streets. Stores gaudy with bright calicoes and cheap finery, and glaring signs of second-hand bargains in furniture and carpets. Butcher wagons and grocery deliveries instead of coupes and carriages; and unwashed children everywhere, as though they thrived in this district of wooden sidewalks and planked streets.

Passing swiftly along for a short distance, she turned into a narrow but more cleanly street, and walked slowly as the grade ascended. Looking to the right and left she discovered on the next crossing a little store, vacant now, which had evidently been a florist shop, for in the show window there still stood a half withered bouquet intended for a funeral decoration; and just around the corner from this, on a street somewhat wider, there was an undertaking establishment. She crossed the street; on this corner there was a grocery store, prosperous looking and well kept; and she left it, too, behind her, and began the ascent of a number of steps in the sidewalk, for the street was so steep here that it was possible only for pedestrians to ascend. Then she stood where this narrow side street landed on a broad, terrace-like street, a quiet, cleanly place, and just opposite to her was a new three-story building with a broad entrance door and signs of various import on either side of it. There was a doctor's office in the building; and a dancing-master was to be found here, teachers of music and the languages; while a dressmaker or two had rooms in different parts of the house. Then the landlord's sign announced that finely furnished rooms could be rented for offices or

housekeeping, and altogether the place had a quiet and respectable air. She entered the open door and began the ascent of the broad, well-carpeted stairs till she saw a door opposite her on the first landing. It was a door of exceedingly dark wood, with an elaborate lock and knob, which she turned and entered the room. There was a window just across from the door and through it she could see swaying trees in what had once been a fine garden. Between her and the window stood a large, square table, with a polished surface, from which the cover had been removed and hastily thrown over the face of a man who lay on a couch beside the table—dead. The couch was close against the wall, and the table was in front of it, and she stood by the table with her eyes fixed intently on the still form stretched upon the couch, her hands clasping each other in mute agony.

The man who lay there was tall, his shapely limbs covered by garments of coarse canvas of a dark brown color, his slender feet encased in finest boots, not shoes. The table cover was thrown over his head and breast, but one arm was visible, and the waxen hand held a strip of folded paper between long, well-shaped fingers.

Could she but read what was on the paper, she thought; but she must hasten from here before she gave way to the dizziness coming upon her. She must not faint, not faint, she said to herself; not faint, she repeated, and she turned and fled before her strength should give way. The door closed softly behind her, and with noiseless steps she began to descend the stairs. Below, in the shadow of the staircase, she could see two figures hiding, and she heard the smothered sobs of a woman, while a man's voice whispered brokenly:

"He told me to come at ten o'clock this morning but make no sign till eleven, no matter what I might see."

Then she gained the street and walked rapidly, she did not know in what direction. She missed the street she had come on, but she found the crowded thoroughfare again after awhile; and while she stood on the corner waiting for the approaching horse-cars, she saw Gregoria coming from an opposite direction. Without the least surprise she addressed her, and Gregoria, unaccountably out of breath, managed to say: "Yes, my lady, I go walking, too," before she lifted her mistress into the car. Then the maid turned suddenly on her mistress:

"Where you get yellow rose on your bonnet, my lady?" she asked, sharply; and Eva raised her hand to her head.

"I did not know it was there," she said absently.

Once at her home Gregoria quickly removed her lady's walking dress, excluded the bright sun, and left the room. But she had placed a paper in her hand first, the paper which Eva had seen in the cold, white hand she had loved so. Unfolding it, she read, with the same unnatural composure she had felt through the whole of this terrible morning; and as she read, the walls of her gilded cage receded farther and farther, and the breeze of a May morning was fanning her fevered cheek, and she sat lightly in the saddle. Her horse was going at an easy, even pace with his horse and he was chanting in low, melodious cadences:

Some time, perchance, when this warm heart is cold,
These trembling fingers drop their treasures all
And growing fairest from the crumbling mould,
The violets o'er me wave their azure pall.

When life for thee has lost its summer glow,
And in some idle hour old fancies stir
The embers of a flame which long ago
Love kindled for his willing worshipper—

If then, too late repenting, you shall weave
Flowers of remembrance on my grave to cast,
My soul the offering shall with joy receive
And cancel thence the shadows of the past.

And when he had ended he had turned to kiss away the tears from her cheeks. "Poor child!" he had said, "how it would pain you to pain any one you loved."

"I would rather die," she had answered him in all sincerity. And he was lying dead of the hurt she had given him; and she had but now looked, dry-eyed, upon his lifeless form.

Gregoria, out in the carpeted hall, walked noiselessly back and forth. She had driven away the chamber girl, whom she had found there busy sweeping and dusting, and the girl in her hurry had left her broom.

Had her master already heard of the death—the suicide—Gregoria wondered. Would he come storming home to confront his wife? He would not be admitted, she was determined on that, and she cast a longing look at the broomstick and rather wished he would come.

But she drew forth her beads and began to pray: "Mother of Seven Sorrows, send tears to the hot eyes of the poor child," and when she heard her sobs at last she went to her, gathered her up from the floor and laid her on the couch, sitting beside her, still telling her beads in a half-loud monotone.

Early the next morning Gregoria stood by the bedside of her mistress.

"Mi querida," she said softly, "Mr. Watson send me up to tell you he want you go to theater with him tonight;

and you must go." There was no answer, and repeating, "You must go, querida," she left the room. Returning to her master she delivered his wife's message: "She thanked him for his attention and would be delighted."

"And what play they play, my lady would like to know."

" 'Othello,' " was the grim reply.

A PICTURE OF THE PLAINS

It may read like a very prosaic thing, the meeting of two wagon trains—say, a military outfit and a freighter's train—on the western prairies; but in reality there is something so grand and majestic, so altogether romantic, about it, that, were I an artist I should want no better motif, no more "taking" subject, for my brush and pencil. The plains have often been likened to the ocean—vast, solitary, illimitable; and the billows that rise and roll on the great water-mass are aptly reproduced in the character of these prairies, where for days, sometimes, you see one little, gentle undulation after another rise before you, and your half unconscious speculation is always, "Shall I see anything after ascending this solid wave?" Sometimes, too, quite a steep little pitch drops down from a bank or a mesa; but when you rise to the height of it, the same wide, open plain is again before you. I cannot think of a more impressive scene than I witnessed, years ago, on these plains, some ten days out from Fort Union, New Mexico, on the way back to the States. Our command was not a large one, only troops enough to protect a train of from thirty to forty army wagons, a few ambulances and carriages, beside a number of volunteer soldiers, mustered out of service, and availing themselves of General Alexander's permission to travel under cover of his command.

It was early May. The brilliant tints of sunrise had not yet died out of the sky, though all the earth was flooded with golden light and warmth. The atmosphere

was pure, fresh, and perfectly clear—as it seems to be only on these plains, and just in this region. We were early risers, by force of circumstance; and when we had been on our way but a little while, we saw in the distance the serpent-like line of another train moving slowly toward us. It came nearer and nearer, and our wagon-master, having urged on his mule for a tour of inspection, reported to the General that it was a merchant train for Santa Fe, belonging to the firm of Spiegelberg Brothers, of that place. There were about twenty wagons, besides a light carriage drawn by two magnificent horses, and the private menage of the travelers, drawn, like our conveyances, by patient mules. By this time the plain around us presented a lively appearance. The wagon-masters and assistants of the two trains made flying visits to each other, while the trains moved slowly along at the usual snail's pace. Some of the mustered-out soldiers of our command had messages and letters to send back to Santa Fe by the merchant train; and some of the freighter's employees had like favors to ask of the teamsters going to the States in our outfit. Only the respective chiefs of the two expeditions had no intercourse with each other.

De Long, our wagon-master, had informed the General that two members of the Speigelberg firm were in the carriage preceding their freight train, and we were now so near each other that we could plainly see the occupants of the elegant vehicle. But the military element and the civil do not affiliate very readily on the frontier, though there is seldom a lack of courtesy or politeness on either side. Singularly enough, the meeting of the trains took place just at one of the steep

pitches I have spoken of. The General's huge ambulance, with its four stout mules, commenced the descent just as the airy carriage of the merchant princes, drawn by the high-bred American horses began to climb the little rise. And never have I seen so picturesque a scene as that presented here on the barren plains. As the first conveyances met, there was a simultaneous raising of hats. The General had a massive figure, with eyes of the clearest blue, calm and serene in expression; a long, full beard of tawny yellow, and an air, so simple, yet so stately, that even in the soldier's blouse and slouch hat he wore, the man "made to command" could be recognized. The two figures on the other side had something of the airy grace which pervaded the whole equipage. Of Jewish descent, with fine-cut features, dark eyes, and richly curling hair—dressed faultlessly, even to light-colored kids on their hands—they formed the most decided contrast to our good General. All three gentlemen bowed with equal courtesy, though varied elegance of manner. On they passed, not a moment's halt, not the slightest pause—one ambulance after the other, one freight team after the next. For half an hour I leaned from the ambulance, and watched the white-roofed army wagons, swaying heavily as the drivers held back their six mules while going down the first sharp pitch, and then rattling on merrily to even ground; the clumsy freight wagons creaking and groaning under their heavy burden; the teamsters talking vigorously to their straining animals while laboring up this sharp rise, and cracking their whips triumphantly when they had made it at last. Then came the mounted troops, and the cooks and servants, perched on almost anything they

could find in the baggage-wagons. This merry rabble was not so reserved as the fine folks at the head of the caravan, and many a noisy greeting was exchanged as the wagons passed each other; many a laugh-provoking jest startled the field-lark from her lowly nest, and sent her skyward with her joyous song. Far in the distance loomed the Spanish Peaks, indistinct and shadowy, as the phantoms which we chase in life and call by the names we love the best—Fame, Wealth, Greatness, Power—and like them seeming to recede farther and farther the nearer we think to approach, till, worn and fainting, we lie down to die in the desolate road through the wilderness, where there is no drop of water to cool our lips, no pitying tree to shelter from the scorching sun.

THE PRIEST AND THE SOLDIER

"And whin the ould Mexican died, he died saying 'Cueva.'"

"An' phwat does that mane, now?"

Sergeant Flaherty turned his face away, with an expression that plainly said: "This is what a sergeant of Troop O, ——teenth Cavalry, gets for lowering himself to the social level of an infantry corporal." Then he relented and replied: "Cueva means a cave, ye blockhead. Have ye been six months in New Mexico and don't know that?"

Corporal O'Rourke was not thin-skinned in any sense, and he questioned again, interestedly:

"An' did the fellow want to be buried in a cave?"

"Divil do I know," the sergeant made mollified reply. "But have ye niver heard," he submitted mysteriously, "that sometimes there do be money and treasures and things buried in caves?"

At this moment both men jumped up and stood with hands at salute, for Father Heney, coming from Officers' Row, crossed the parade ground in their direction.

"Now there's a saintly man for ye," remarked the sergeant; and the corporal added:

"An' they do say as how the major's daughter vows that if ever she marries the lieutenant at all, it will be Father Heney to perform the ceremony, no matter where he be."

"He's going right back to Los Angeles they say; and that he came all the way through Arizona to help the

major's people find out about the son. They always thought old Felipe, the thafe of the world, knew where he was."

"An' he died before the Father came."

"What good if he had been still alive? Unless he, or some of his own, or of the other gang, had made an open confession."

"That's so; that's so, in a minute," assented the honest corporal.

In another frontier post, more rock-bound, more desolate even than Fort Layard, and nearly a hundred miles away, the lieutenant spoken of by the two "non-coms," First Lieutenant Oury Kirk, One Hundred and Seventh Infantry, U. S. A.—to be exact—was at that very moment sitting silent and alone, his duties done, his thoughts traveling across the dry, sun-baked stretches of dreary mesa and steep, cleft-riven rock piles that formed "the country" between this, Fort Howie, and Fort Layard. He himself was silent; not so the instrument he held in his arm, a Spanish guitar of finest workmanship and finish, and the chords he struck were of such harmony, proving him such a master hand on the instrument, that it was evidently not meant in derision when they called him "Kirk of the tuneful guitar." And if any further excuse for playing a guitar was needed, it might be found in the fact that the young lieutenant was very much in love and far away from the object of his adoration.

Fort Howie was only a one-company post; the quarters but rudely constructed; and though officers, men and horses were comfortably housed, this did not mean much in a climate where overpowering heat was more

to be guarded against than the light cold; for Howie was well on in Arizona, across the line from New Mexico. In fact, it stood where the troops were as often called upon to protect the scattering white settlers from the depredations committed by civilized rogues as from the attacks of the savage Indians.

It was, therefore, a case of **quien sabe** as to what was the purpose of O Troop of the ——teenth Cavalry from Fort Layard, that rode into Fort Howie on the evening of the second day after our introduction to Lieutenant Kirk, with Major Fothergill at the head of the company.

Not even after taps had sounded, and this young man was alone behind closed curtain—gray army blankets hung over casement without glass—with the younger lieutenant who had come with the troop, was he enlightened on this subject. The mystery seemed rather to deepen.

"Miss Mildred was weeping bitterly when she bade me good-by," Lieutenant Russell said to him, "and Mrs. Fothergill hung on to the neck of the major dry-eyed but pale as death. 'Bring certainty,' I heard her say, whatever that might mean."

"About me—I wonder?" asked his comrade. "Surely Mildred has no doubts of my love for her or loyalty to her," and his handsome face flushed with indignation.

"Oh, you silly——," his friend consoled him. "She told me to give you the kindest messages, as there was no time to write."

"And marching under sealed orders, are you?" mused Kirk.

"So at least the major wishes it considered," was the discreet reply.

The major at this time was alone in his quarters, his light out, in compliance with rules and regulations, watching in the darkness the land around as far as he could see it. His face was pale and set, as his wife's had been at parting, but he brushed away a tear, as painful memories crowded on him. He was thinking of his eldest born, the brave, the gay, the reckless, as some had called him. Reckless, his father knew, only in the sense that nothing was too daring for him; no scheme so hazardous but that he would undertake it. And so it was intrusted to him to bring to Fort Layard one year ago a part of the funds left behind by the paymaster, in safe keeping at the post from which he started out. Gold and paper, a considerable sum, in a small unsightly keg, iron-bound, though, and not an easy prey to would-be robbers. Lieutenant Fothergill had asked but his own orderly beside the driver of the four-mule ambulance, in which the orderly sat beside the driver, both armed to the teeth, the little keg to be stored under the back seat, and the young officer was to ride ahead on his black horse, on the return of the party, as he did the day he left Fort Layard.

When the small outfit had not returned in a week's time the supposition was that a longer and safer route had been chosen. But when, in the course of the next week, one of the ambulance mules crawled lame and half-starved, into the post, with pieces of torn harness on its body, the whole garrison turned out in search, and they found the harness-mate to the mule, dead in its traces and still attached to the ambulance, which lay on its side, broken and shattered in a gulch, from which the mules had evidently made vain efforts to drag it. And

neither the keg nor its contents could be found in spite of the most diligent search.

There were those at the post and elsewhere, who were unkind enough to shake their heads wisely and point out how strange it was that the two wheelers should have been left in their harness in the ambulance, and the two leaders gone. The lieutenant had his own horse; and the two men who went with him, would thus have had a mule apiece. And the lieutenant had insisted on taking only his orderly beside the driver, in spite of all protests.

It was queer, they said, yes, very queer. And by and by these stories crept around the garrison and came to the ears of the sorrowing father and grief-stricken mother, and the proud-spirited girl who was the sister of the missing young officer, released her fiance, Lieutenant Kirk, and said that never would she become any man's bride till her brother's name had been cleared of these foul, unspoken charges.

With break of day the O Troop men, reinforced by a detachment of the Fort Howie cavalry, in command of Lieutenant Kirk, left the post and took up the dim traces of what was supposed to be a wagon road. Travel in wagon or ambulance was rare; and the sand that was swept up from the desert to the very foot of the mountains by the winds of the plains, soon obliterated all signs of wagon or horseback travel.

The little command skirted along close at the foot of the rocky ledge that descended from the plateau on which the rude fortifications lay, and though the mountain spur grew monotonous, as all things do in Arizona, by its tedious length, there was variety enough in its character,

formation and coloring. Portions of it seemed faintly tinted marble, in this early, rosy light of dawn some of the rocks looked like crumbling rust, though millions might have been quarried and coined out of their wealth. Sometimes the blue and the dull green of a copper-bearing ledge might be followed for half a mile close to the ground, and again a mountain of obsidian would rise sheer from a base of hard, stubby, unproductive growth of grass. And in crevices where a handful of sand had been moistened by the winter's rain, the palo verde and and mesquite had made a stunted growth, higher up than the cactus, that had crept up from the desert below and lay sprawling here, could reach its thorny arms.

As the sun grew hotter and the point of the rock ledge had been reached, the fantastic, often gigantic forms of the cactus could be seen on the sand waste illimitably spread before the eyes of the soldiers and their old commander at the head of the column. His aide, Lieutenant Russell, was speculating within himself whether the "sealed orders," mythical as he thought them, would carry them across the plain, for only one day's rations had been drawn, and no extra ammunition issued.

In the meantime the eagle eye of the commander seemed to penetrate every fold and cleft in the ever-changing face of the mountain as they slowly wended their way along the foot of it; and though both soldier and miner learn by intuition to regard these hiding places for Apaches with keenest interest, there was something strained in the expression of Major Fothergill's face, and not once did he address a cheering word to his aide, or notice that the horses showed signs of being fagged. To be sure, a halt had been called twice, and each time a

small squad had been sent in search of "Indian signs," right in among the clumps of palo verde and mesquite in some narrow chasm, and each time the men had been questioned in regard to "solid ground under foot, or anything peculiar in the appearance of the territory."

And now, at the point of rocks a halt was made, and the major beckoned his aide and Lieutenant Kirk to his side.

"We will turn to the right when we mount again," he said, "and keep close to the base of these rocks. You will report at once any peculiar formation, any striking feature your men may discover in this ledge. And keep a sharp lookout," he added with more sternness than seemed necessary.

That they were not really supposed or expected to find "Indian signs" was attested by the fact that the bugle signalled the troop to remount. As they moved slowly on, officers and men could not have pried more keenly into every cleft and cranny of these rocks, if they had been miners looking for the lost ledge or college professors on vacation hunting for specimens for their collection.

Still the same monotony in vegetation, the same variety of formation obtained here, as the other side of the rock ledge had shown; palo verde stunted and meager, scraggy growth of mesquite above, sprawling, tangled cactus at the foot.

Suddenly the horse of the trooper on the left, in the foremost rank, sprang aside with a sharp start, and Lieutenant Russell was quick to see the cause. A hideous grinning skull, with a tuft of hair still clinging to it, lay bleaching on the sand, and almost at the same moment a soldier on the right called Sergeant Flaherty's atten-

tion to a remnant of the blue sleeve of a soldier's jacket. As the command halted, Lieutenant Kirk saw his commander swaying in the saddle, big beads of perspiration on his brow, from which his hat had fallen.

Half a dozen men were already clambering up the rise in the direction from which a trail of faded rags of a uniform seemed to lead outward. Then one of them turned back quickly to report that behind the brush-covered growth, from which a number of bleaching bones had evidently been dragged by the coyotes, an opening in the rocks could be seen. Lieutenant Kirk had only stopped long enough to see that their commander, who stood trembling by the side of his horse, had recovered, and he returned at once with the man. Unheeding sharp thorns and galling prickers, by which everything in Arizona growth seems armed, Lieutenant Kirk forced aside the brush that shrouded the entrance to the small cavernous opening in a pile of dark rocks; and his straining eyes first fell upon the gleam of a saber and then traveled quickly back to where the light played on metal spurs in cavalry boots, rotting from the rain and shrunken by the sun. And was not that the yellow of the cavalry soldier strap, unbleached in the dismal shelter of the cave?

The soldier stood aside while the lieutenant made investigations, but when he heard Sergeant Flaherty exclaim, "the major," he turned quickly to see his commander approaching, leaning on the arm of Lieutenant Russell. And they were close upon him, painful as it seemed for the suddenly-aged man to move. One step more, and they had made the ascent. With a quick, solemn gesture, Lieutenant Kirk threw up a warning hand to ward off nearer approach.

"In the name of God, Russell," he cried with blanched lips and shaking voice, "in the name of God, take the major away."

And the soldiers closed in around the open cavern to hide its grewsome contents from the eyes of their stricken commander.

After a brief delay Sergeant Flaherty led his men down again, and then Lieutenant Kirk reported to his commanding officer:

"Lieutenant Frank Fothergill has been found, sir, murdered, evidently, and his body hidden in this cave. I have every reason to believe that the two men on detail with him were also murdered, and the remains partly dragged from the cave by the coyotes. But I can find no trace of the government property in the cave where I found these bodies lying."

The major had made an effort to steady himself against his faithful horse, and as he removed his hat and raised his eyes to heaven, his trembling lips murmured a faint "Thank God."

"A soldier's honor above a soldier's life," seemed the sentiment in every trooper's heart; and every hat was doffed, every head was bent, and one young soldier, a recent rookie, evidently forgot discipline to the extent of bursting out, "Arrah and may the saints——"

But a look from Sergeant Flaherty caused him to silently invoke the protection of the saints he had called on all too loudly.

Sergeant Flaherty now took charge, while the two young officers saw to it that a comfortable resting place was made for their commander, and he, in turn, asked them to come close to him. Whether he explained to

them how and through whom he received finger prints that led to the discovery just made, and the clearing away of all foul imputations against his son's honor, no one can tell, but the War Department probably knows it. And it remained always a matter of speculation as to what particular brand of outlaws belonged the miscreants who murdered the three soldiers. And whether the old Mexican who said only "cueva," because he had become palsied, belonged to that or some rival band, was never known to the world outside.

The man who had looked suddenly so old when the shock of discovery first struck him, grew stronger in the telling of devoted, unselfish efforts on the part of one who stood aloof from the busy world, its empty honors and its fleeting rewards, yet watched with never-slumbering care over the welfare of his spritual children, of the long, laborious journey undertaken in spite of age and infirmities, so that no living creature should be wronged, yet the dead be righted in their graves. Perhaps he knew that the dead had found no grave as yet, and he wanted that their bones should rest in hallowed earth.

For the present, however, these victims to duty were to be left where they had been slain, and Lieutenant Kirk signed to his sergeant how to place the remains in the three rude graves hastily dug. When all was ready the major was led to the grave of his son, by which he knelt in fervent prayer, and as he knelt and humbly and devoutly struck his cross, every son of Erin kneeling by their comrades' graves, blessed that old man and made their cross as humbly and devoutly as did their commander. The others bowed reverently, and then the

soldiers piled brush on the graves with a will and weighted it down with pieces of rock from the ledge, to prevent the coyotes from uncovering the bones of those who had found temporary burial there. Then taps was sounded by the bugler, and as the clear, long-drawn notes floated softly out on the heat-quivering air, peace and thankfulness came over the heart of the father who had lost a son and the lover who had won a bride.

For we may be sure that when Lieutenant Kirk was granted a brief leave of absence after a long, impatient wait of three months' time, he found his way quickly to Fort Layard, and Mildred no longer refused to become his own for life. Strange to say, O'Rourke, corporal One Hundred and Fifth Infantry, proved a true prophet, if not a mind reader, for the major's daughter did indeed make the condition that Father Heney should bless their union and solemnize the marriage.

"But Father Heney is in Los Angeles," Lieutenant Kirk protested, "and it will be so far around from there back to New York and Washington for our wedding trip."

PAY DAY AT THE MINE

A lady's trunk seemed so out of place, in this wagon; as much so as the owner of the trunk herself.

The scraggy Mexican mules had an American driver; and he had taken this female passenger on at Girandara, together with several kegs and sacks which had come under escort from a flourishing town on the American side. The Guajaca Mine employed all the Americans that found their way out here; deserters from camp and fort, for a hundred miles around; horsethieves, broken-down gamblers—anything that did not like to hear the screech of the American Eagle, but loved its image on American coin.

The manager of the mine, the Superintendent, the Mexican called him, was an American himself, who had brought with him a young wife, timid, shrinking, home-sick, but idolized by all the good-natured, black-eyed Mexican women of the mining community.

A number of them were with her now, in the low adobe house with rough board finishing, with glass panes in the windows of this one room only; with bare walls, and a floor on which were spread strips of the home woven hurga for carpet. A few rawhide chairs; a rough table, and a rudely constructed bedstead, on which rested, or rather tossed, the young wife, soon to be a mother. She could speak but a few words of Spanish, and she understood still less of the language; if she could have felt hatred in her gentle heart at all, it would have been for everything that surounded her in this dry, sun-baked,

inhospitable country, with the exception of these women, whose love she felt, but whose ways and language she could not always understand.

Though a piece of blanket had been hung over one of the windows, to keep out the glaring light from the sufferer on her bed of pain, she could read ill-represed excitement in the face of the woman entering the room on tip-toe; and she looked up with eager inquiry, hoping, she hardly knew for what. There were whisperings and subdued exclamations.

"A woman?" she asked.

"Yes; a woman; she had come on the wagon that had brought the money to pay the long-due wages of the miners."

"Who is she," asked the sick woman. But the Mexican raised her shoulders in disdain. "Quien sabe?" she said; and then she added a word that the little wife did not understand.

As the patient did not require immediate attention, the last-comer remained, while the others, with ill-concealed curiosity, slipped out of the room one by one. And one by one they came back. The woman, they said, was gaily dressed; wore jewels and fine clothes.

"Who was she?" still asked the sick woman. And in reply came the same shrug of the shoulder; the same word added, which the little American did not understand. But the little episode helped to distract her, in this God-forgotten country, where nothing ever happened save a knifing among the Mexicans, or a shooting scrape among the American miners.

And directly it struck on her ear that this stranger had

light-colored hair—yellow hair. Her dull eyes brightened.

"Yellow hair?" she asked, "and blue eyes?"

"No, black eyes; yet she was undoubtedly Americana, but——" and again the word she did not understand, spoken lightly and contemptuously.

"An American?" She started up, wild with expectation. "Bring her to me—oh! bring her to me—now; I must see her, quick;—oh! do bring her to me——" she pleaded.

A Mexican woman is above all things a woman; warm-hearted, full of pity for her sisters, even for those who have swerved from the straight and narrow path. The heart-broken appeal of this poor child, who would soon be mother to another child, moved them to tears; they felt no resentment at the yearning expressed for the sight of one of her own nation; even though they had been so devoted and loving to this tender little exile.

Silence fell on those remaining in the room, when one of the women had been sent out to bring the stranger in; and then Donna Felipe, the oldest among them, suggested that possibly the Superintendent might be averse to his wife receiving this strange woman in their house. A pitiful look of apprehension came into the childish face.

"Only this once," she pleaded, "only this once"; and in a sudden spasm of pain, wrung her hands entreatingly.

Then Donna Felipe thoughtfully hung a heavy cloth over the lights of the other casement—Mexicans in that country consider windows an unnecessary luxury, anyhow—and just then a tall, well-rounded figure stepped

into the the low doorway, an air of defiance somehow showing in the looks and bearing of the woman.

Perhaps it was well that the eyes of the child-wife were blinded with tears. But the strange woman who had entered, saw only the white face and the hungrily-outstretched arms of the woman in travail; and hastily casting aside flaring hat and gaudy veil, she snatched up the reclining figure and rested the drooping head against her breast.

"Oh, sister, sister!" cried the helpless mite in broken tones. "Sister, whom God has sent me in my hour of need—you must never, never leave me; will you promise to stay with me, always?"

"Always, poor child, as long as you need me." The low voice was in singular contrast with the hard black eyes—now melting in hesitant feeling,—and the lines which passion and world-anger, perhaps sorrow, had graven on the bold, proud face.

The name which the Mexican women had spoken, and which the little innocent had not understood, was branded on the woman's forehead. But when the Mexicans watched the furtive passes she made over cheeks and lips and eyebrows with her handkerchief, they softened toward her, and a low-breathed "misericordia" came from their lips. How could they judge what misfortune had driven this woman to her fall? A handsome woman she must have been; a better and softer look in her face already since some of the paint had been wiped away;—perhaps she wished in this solemn moment that her shame might all be wiped away as well.

Her hair, heavy and fine as silk, would have made her a noticeable personage in any assemblage; but it was

evident that her eyebrows had been penciled to a deeper black, to make the contrast to her golden hair more striking.

The little wife had quickly sobbed herself to sleep, and when she woke, in sudden agony, the woman, who supported her, asked in broken Spanish, that the husband should be sent for. She knew full well that a physician was out of the question, and would hardly be needed where the elderly Donna Felipe was present.

Comforting the patient as she would a child, she still threw impatient glances toward the door, and soon a stir among the women announced the coming of the superintendent. A man past his first youth, whose mien, naturally haughty, had grown stern with increasing years, appeared upon the threshold, and—had the yellow hair of the strange woman suddenly turned into the fabled serpent's, she could not have looked more like a Medusa than at this moment.

Her fingers must have clinched the little hand she held with painful grip; there was a moan from the sufferer; but the man, who stood, petrified, just inside the door, paid no heed. Like a magnet, the strange woman seemed to draw him, though she had raised a warning, repellant hand at his approach.

Womanlike, she had regained full self-possession first; and while his blanched lips formed one word—"Constantia"—she pointed with commanding gesture to the form that had glided from her arms to the pillow.

The man bent over his wife, but she shrank from him, calling faintly for "Sister—sister!" When she was quieted again, Donna Felipe stood beside the bed while the strange woman turned aside a moment to the super-

tendent. None heard her, or understood when she asked abruptly, with a backward motion of her hand,——

"That is not the woman—?"

"No!" replied the man; then, with a savage oath, "She robbed me——"

"As you robbed me"; put in the woman coolly. "But she robbed you of your money only; while you took all from me—honor, and fortune and wifehood."

"Have you no home?" asked the man.

"None, since you drove me, a disgraced woman, from yours."

"Your father——"

"In spite of your plausible story he offered me a home, which I would not accept"; she replied with curling lip. "Rather be spurned by strangers than live under the pity and contempt of my father's second wife. And now let me ask: How came you to lay your iron hand on this girl, of whom you have made a plaything to beguile the tedious hours of your enforced solitude? Bought her of some poor man, who had smaller children to support, I'll be bound. Ah! that strikes home; you have the grace to blush."

"You! What are you that you should dare——"

"I am only what you made me; you have my soul on your conscience, as you will have that child's life on your soul should she die this night. Now leave the room; she dreads you as I loathe you."

She turned away, and he walked with unsteady steps to the door, a man suddenly aged as with years.

The grey dawn came slowly struggling in; the dry, sharp chill of the night battling with the first messengers of the dry, sharp heat of the day.

The hangings had been removed from the casements, and Donna Felipe was tenderly spreading a coverlet over the motionless form lying stretched on the rude couch.

"Madre Doloroso!" she prayed, as she looked on the still, white face. "May she straightly enter Paradise, as do those who lose their life while giving life to a child."

The Mexican women were on their knees; the strange woman—no longer a stranger to them now—stood among them, with bowed head, with tear-dimmed eyes; no trace of paint or color on her saddened face; yet with a look, somehow, almost as defiant as the air with which she had entered here the day before. She turned when she saw the man enter the room hesitatingly, though looking with longing eyes toward the bundle Donna Felipe held in her arms. He had given but one shuddering look at the still form covered from sight on the bed.

"She gave the child to me!" the woman spoke fiercely; a lioness defending her whelp might have shown set white teeth like that.

"You have no home to give him," said the man with a faint attempt at defiance.

"Is that a taunt?" Then quickly smothering her anger, she said quietly: "My father will gladly give a home to his daughter, repentant, and bringing with her **your** child."

The stress of hatred she laid on the pronoun shook him out of his lethargy.

"My child shall stay with me," he said angrily. "Donna Felipe will tend him and take care of him."

"Your child shall go with me"; she replied determin-

edly. "Donna Felipe, see that all is ready for our journey in this hour."

He stretched out his hand to touch the child. "Stop!" she commanded. "Do not touch the child; she gave him to me!"

"Shall I never see my own child?" The spirit of the once proud, reckless man was broken. "How shall I know him, where shall I find him?"

"He will bear your name," she said, "and you will find him always at my father's home." She took the little bundle from the Mexican's arms.

"Pray attend me to the carrete, Donna Felipe," she said as she swept from the room.

He laid a detaining hand on her arm, which she shook off as if it were some loathsome reptile. "Will you forgive me——"

But the eyes she turned on him so flashed and burned with passion that involuntarily he stretched a protecting hand toward the child. In a moment her flaming anger was under control.

"Yes," she said with cold disdain, "I forgive you—for the sake of her child," she added softly, as she drew close her veil, and passed out amid the murmured benedictions of the Mexican women.

THE WOMAN WHO LOST HIM

There were six passengers on the stage when it left the Salinas that morning, five men and a woman. There was one more passenger, a fascinating "drummer," but he had taken the outside seat beside the driver when it was found that the lady did not desire this elevated position—for California was still young enough and gallant enough to stand back and give the first choice to any representative of the fair sex, be she fair or not. For, "a woman was a woman" even at this period; and each of the five men, as they climbed into the stage after the lady had been helped in by the landlord of the hotel, who was also stage agent, had asked that individual in dumb show who this one might be. And each, upon perceiving by the blank look and shoulder shrug, that the hotel keeper was no wiser than himself on this point, turned a discreetly scrutinizing glance on the female passenger as soon as he and his overcoat and valise had been properly placed and adjusted.

The lady herself seemed utterly unconscious of the stealthy attention lavished upon her. The black veil that covered her hat and face was neither dense nor heavy, and she removed it in a little while with the evident desire of enjoying the outlook upon the Gabilan Range, bathed now in the early sunlight, which lay upon it in soft, dreamy tints of pink and rose, a golden haze weaving enchantment about the peaks and crags of the distant mountain.

It was for the purpose of obtaining this view, proba-

bly, that she had elected to dispose herself in a corner on the front seat of the stage, her back to the horses, instead of occupying the back seat as the choicest. The middle seat, swaying with every movement of the stage, was occupied solely by the man who owned the largest share of the country surrounding—lands held formerly by haughty Don and proud Senor, and which had passed into the keeping of the man who had acquired them—anyhow, and taken possession with the same air of bonhommie and the brusque show of good nature which characterized him in his dealings with all men. He had come to California in the days that followed the age pastoral, and which might justly be called the period of spoliation, when the watchword and the battlecry of the incoming American had been, "Get land; get land honestly if you can—but get land." He was supposed to be a little lame in one leg; so everybody was willing to give him the best seat and stand back for his comfort generally; he was supposed to be a little hard of hearing; so everybody leaned forward to make it convenient for him to catch their meaning.

The back seat was occupied by two men alone—the wealthiest merchant in town and the big Dutch butcher, Meyer. The theory was, in stage days, that the more heavily the stage was loaded the more lightly it swung, and so there were on the front seat two passengers besides the lady. All these five men, after one keen glance at their fair fellow-traveler, had looked from one to another and finally concluded that she belonged to neither of them. After settling this, came the question, "Who is she then?" The wealthy dry goods man, with a red-haired wife and nine children at home, assigned her, for

one moment, to the drummer on top of the stage; but concluded, the next, that her quiet, sober dress stamped her as not that kind of a woman.

The man in the floppy straw hat and rather unkempt hair of indefinite color, sitting on the seat with the lady, raised a pair of gentle brown eyes to her face for a moment and then fell to drawing his fingers through whiskers as long and unkempt as his hair. Something about him spoke of fallen fortunes; and a dormant element of combativeness that might be roused into activity at any unexpected moment, could be read in the lines of his sallow face.

Next to him sat a stranger from the city, no doubt, a young man, neatly dressed, with natty hat, and kid gloves peeping out of the breast pocket of his coat. But this young man was a newspaper writer, reporter and journalist, and he knew that the gloves worn in an ill-judged and conspicuous manner would very likely prove a bar to his gaining the confidence of his fellow-travelers, and thus cut him off from knowledge and information which he was anxious to gather as material to "work up." For your real rancher looks with disfavor and mistrust upon anyone wearing gloves—as upon one who might "smile and smile and be a villain still."

As the back of the gentleman on the swinging seat in the middle was turned toward him, it was only natural that if he entered into conversation at all, it would be with the man on the same seat with him—the Southern man in the big straw hat.

They had been exchanging remarks on the weather, the crops and the country, in a desultory, hap-hazard way, the man of Southern looks being of the country,

spoke for the country, though he owned but a small slice of it, compared to the holdings of the man occupying the seat in front of them. The roads were rough, for the heavy black adobe soil but recently dry after winter rains, had not yet been ground into powder by the heavy, grain-laden wagons; with their eight, ten and sixteen-horse teams, that would traverse the country a little later in the season.

The stage lumbered slowly along, and he of the straw hat called the attention of the young man with the reporter's note-book to points of interest near and far. In the distant mountain chain it was the peak where Fremont and his men had been encamped; nearer by it was the spot where an incredible number of bushels of wheat had been harvested to the acre; and when they approached the lonesome-looking enclosure with a straggling eucalyptus tree here and there, rustling disconsolately in the wind, above a number of scattered graves, it was not difficult to guess that this was the last resting place of the Catholics of Salinas valley, for a plain black cross rose above the arched gateway. Drawn up by the side of the road near this gate was a wagon with two horses, the front seat alone being occupied. The occupant could not have been more than twenty; and had not his every feature stamped him a Spaniard, his very attitude—stretched indolently but not ungracefully on the seat, and the abandon with which he gave himself up to the making of music on his harmonica, would have proclaimed him as one of this race California born.

He was no mean performer on this unjustly despised instrument; he drew tones from it as sad as earth, as sweet as heaven—tones that stirred the spirit with their

passion and made the tear start with their pathos. Every sound was hushed in the stage, even the horses seemed to step softly for fear of losing a single note, and the lady in the corner was seen to draw out her handkerchief, flutter the dainty white flag a moment, and then press it quickly to her eyes.

"What touching music," said the newspaper man, breaking the silence as they passed.

"Heart-rending," affirmed the man from the South; and no one smiled, for the sentiment was correct, though the syllabication was somewhat extravagant.

Away in the far corner of the graveyard an old man could be seen, kneeling, probably at the grave of someone loved and lost; and Meyer, the big butcher, pointed out the lonely figure to Colonel Dare, the big landowner.

"Old Higuera," said the Dutchman, "he pray by the grave of his son, Vasquez."

"Killed with Vasquez, you mean—" he was corrected.

"Yes, yes; he vas by Vasquez, dey say," he insisted.

"I don't believe it," the dry goods man commented, "the body was brought here some time after the old man and his son came here to live. This was an older son that died."

"Dug him up somewhere else and planted him here—eh?" asked the Colonel facetiously; and the other continued:

"The old man had a female of some kind in the wagon with him when I saw him in town early this morning."

Colonel Dare could not have been so very hard of hearing after all, for this was spoken in an undertone, but he instantly asked—"Eh, what? A woman? What did she

look like—hey? Didn't see? That's like you; if it had been me now——"

The dry goods man, as the husband of one wife and father of nine red-headed children, had evidently admonished his friend to be on his good behavior, for the Colonel checked his laughter and cast one careless look in the direction of the lady passenger. But she was neither sufficiently buxom of form nor rosy of face to hold his attention.

"Higuera," he continued, musingly, "the family certainly does not belong anywhere in this part of California, I am sure they never owned any land around here."

Butcher Meyer exploded with laughter. "No, no, Colonel, if dey own land, den you know dem sure—ha—ha—ho—and deir land, too."

"Well, Dutchman, and if they had owned any fat cattle, then you would have known them and their cattle, too," and the good-natured Colonel thought it was his turn to laugh.

"But I bays for mine caddles," protested the Dutchman.

"But who said I didn't 'bay for mine land,'" the facetious Colonel asked mockingly, and he himself intoned the laugh that went all around the stage.

When the merriment had subsided, Butcher Meyer, with an air of mystery and importance, hinted at something he had heard in regard to the name Higuera not being genuine, to which the Colonel lightly responded that in crossing the plains to come to California names did have a tendency to get slightly mixed, and after thus giving expression to the liberal views he held on the subject of masquerading under different names, the

Colonel dropped the subject. But to the ears of the man from papertown "Vasquez" had a most alluring sound; his most cherished ambition had been to compose a tragedy modeled on the plan of Schiller's "Robbers," and the name of the bandit thus casually mentioned opened so brilliant a vista to his sanguine view that he was fairly dazzled with the vast possibilities in store for him. He turned trustfully to the man in the straw hat.

"You know something of the crimes and depredations of this noted robber chief?" he asked with an air of general interest only.

To his surprise it was Colonel Dare who replied in his roughly bantering, but wholly good-humored way, "Don't for pity's sake start Finnerty on that subject; might just as well set him to talking of what he had and what he was 'before the wah.'"

Finnerty laughed with the rest, though there was a shade of regret in his mild brown eyes.

"But, Colonel," the Dutchman broke in, "me and Mr. Finnerty bote has reason to complain of dat rascal, Vasquez. He steal Mr. Finnerty's horses and almost break him up, and he steals mine fat caddles and almost break me up."

"Didn't 'bay for mine caddle'—eh?" asked the witty Colonel, and a perfect shout of laughter arose from the inside of the stage, so that the drummer on top made up his mind to get inside the very next time the horses were changed or watered. The Colonel, however, continued more soberly:

"Well, Dutchman, I think Finnerty had a good deal more reason to 'complain' than you. They did worry him pretty well. That span of sorrel Patchens would

have brought $10,000 anywhere, and I'd have given $5000 for the black Morgan to match mine."

"And Vasquez took them from you? How? Was there an open battle with him? Do tell me, please." The intending author of the tragedy could no longer bridle his thirst for knowledge, but the older Californians smiled unmovedly at the inquisitive tenderfoot, little dreaming how he meant to make California (and himself) famous through her defunct horsethief and bandit.

"Well, you see—it was really not Vasquez himself who took the stock from me——" the scribe's face fell. "It was a young man who had joined the band that took them."

"One of Vasquez's lieutenants, so to speak," the aspiring dramatist interrupted, with hope revived, and the other continued:

"I was located some sixty miles south of this at this time, had quite a range for my stock and had a Mexican for a vaquero."

"The more fool you," the Colonel put in, sententiously, but neither Mr. Finnerty nor any of the others saw anything offensive in the remark, and the Southerner began again: "As long as they let my stock alone I said nothing, but when they took General Lee—that is"—hastily —"my fine black Morgan, I corralled my vaquero one morning, shook him till his teeth rattled, and he confessed. He told me such a pitiful story, however, that I did not try to get the stallion back; I knew he would be well taken care of by the man that got him."

"Well done for Finnerty," exclaimed the Colonel, laughing angrily. "If we did not know him we might

suspect him of belonging to the gang and having furnished horses for them."

"When they came after my matched sorrels I got kind o' mad," continued Finnerty, unheeding, "but it was so near the end then that I did not get time to do anything about it."

"But the story—what was the story your vaquero told you?"

"Why—you—see—it was about the young man that took the horses."

"The young horsethief, you mean, Finnerty," the Colonel again interrupted.

"Well—he was the son of a man who had been robbed of all his lands by the Americans—Arano was his name, and he had owned thousands upon thousands of acres near Los Angeles. But a smart Yankee had come along and taken possession of the land and the court had confirmed the title, and the poor old man was turned adrift with not a dollar between himself and starvation.

"You know how those things go; the Spaniards are ignorant of our laws and some of them have not an acre of land left, when they really never had the intention of selling and never did sell to the men that now hold the land." With a sudden jerk the narrator checked himself and threw a deprecating look toward Colonel Dare, but this little gentleman was just in the act of placing the foot supposed to be a little lame in a more comfortable position.

"Don't stop, Finnerty," he said with the most audacious good nature, "you're not hitting me hard now; I never lived in Los Angeles, you know. Go right on."

"Thank you, Colonel," said the man from the South

in all sincerity, and continued: "So it stands to reason that these old Spanish people have no great love for us Americans. This case, however, was a particularly aggravating one. Young Arano had just been married to a young lady, handsome, accomplished, raised in affluence, to whom, supposing himself heir to his father's wealth, he had pictured a life of luxury and enjoyment at his side. You can imagine what his feelings were when he had not even the plainest home to take her to. She was a descendant of the Oliveras, they say, her mother Spanish, her father American."

"Englishman, Finnerty," corrected the Colonel. "Us Americans may have taken their land from the Spaniards, but the English took their women."

"And she refused to go back home and abandon her young husband. He, the poor, foolish young fellow, undertook to drive the invaders (as he considered them) from his father's lands at the point of a pistol, and—well, he was made to suffer for his rash courage. They are a downtrodden race—these Spaniards, and the people who conquered them have despoiled them of their possessions." There was a dangerous ring to the patient man's voice, and a sudden flash in the kind brown eyes, and the would-be dramatist, intent as he was on gathering material, seemed all at once to hear the distant echo of a chorus of lugubrious negro voices:

"—My Old Kentucky Home—good-night!"

"—And I have the deepest pity for them. Now, when the poor young fellow made his escape from the jail where they had put him where should he go—what should he do but join Vasquez? His young and beautiful wife—my vaquero said she was beautiful."

"Your vaquero was the brudder of Mr. Arano, I guess." The red-faced butcher thought it was his turn now to quiz Mr. Finnerty. But the Southerner took the world and himself seriously and answered:

"No, for he said the brother was much younger than Francis Arano." Then in answer to a beseeching look from the scribe, he continued where he had left off. "The wife remained with the poor, stricken father, and never saw her husband again. Young Arano had come to the neighborhood where I was living south of here at the time and he took my black Morgan to make his way back to see his wife before leaving the country; for he intended going with Vasquez to Mexico. I could not be angry with the poor young fellow for taking the horse."

"Finnerty, did you ever steal a horse yourself?" broke in the irrepressible Colonel, and Finnerty, meditatively combing his long beard with his fingers, admitted:

"Well, Colonel, I did borrow a horse from my neighbor in order to get away from you'uns during the wah."

"Ever return the horse or pay for it?"

"You'uns never gave me a chance," was the ingenuous reply.

"I thought it was strange you had such a fellow feeling for a horsethief," the Colonel remarked; and Finnerty laughed with the rest till the tears stood in his eyes.

The stage had long since accelerated its speed, for the mountain road it was beginning to traverse was not hampered by the clods of black adobe soil for which the Salinas plains are famous or notorious—as the case may be. The views were becoming more grand as the Pass was approached, yet there were no glimpses yet to be had of the old town of San Juan with its older Mission, in the

valley below, where the stage as well as the horses were to be changed. The day was growing warmer, the big butcher, Meyer, had long since removed his coat, and now sat fanning his face, big and red, and still quivering with rills of laughter.

The Colonel seemed to have settled down to a nap in good earnest at last, though a glancing look had swept the face of the woman in her corner of the stage before he had closed his eyes. "A stone image"—he dubbed her in his mind, for she had not even smiled at his witticisms. The journalist, however, had seen how the clear gray eyes, almond shaped, black fringed, beneath delicately-arched black brows, had kindled when he himself had been so moved by the pathetic outburst of the Southerner; and in the drama which he intended to construct on the plan of Schiller's "Robbers" out of the Vasquez material he had designed her as the Amelia of his play. "For," he argued, "an Amelia must be sympathetic above all things."

The lady's veil had long since dropped and he could see the dark, full hair, wavy at the temples—not curly. "A bandit bride doesn't want curly hair," he said to himself, "just this wave in the hair is the proper thing." Then he fell to speculating what the lady's name might be; he wanted to give his heroine her name, too, as well as her exterior attributes and mental qualities. In short, his drama was making huge strides, and he felt it imperative to urge Finnerty to a conclusion while the aggravating Colonel slept.

"But the Colonel mentioned two more horses you lost through the Vasquez band," he persisted in his blandest, most attentive manner.

"Not only by de same band, but by the same young fellow," put in the big butcher. He had never forgotten or forgiven the five hundred head of "fat caddles" that the gang had relieved him of.

"Well—yes; my Patchen sorrels. You see, young Arano had a close call; so much money was to be had for the capture or the death of any of the band that every loafer in the country took a shot at them; and one of them hit my Morgan stallion. But Arano escaped. Where he hid I don't know, but I really believe my vaquero knew of his taking my matched sorrels."

The Dutchman laughed.

"Finnerty," he commented in a tone between bitterness and compassion, "a butcher like myself—a man what trabbles through the country with his $40,000 or $50,000 to buy up caddles, knows every man in the country, wedder he be a honest man or a horsethief. It's a blessing everybody in dis country know you for an honest man, udderwise he take you for a horsethief, you talk so foolish. Somebody don't know you he think you horsethief, too. Of course, your vaquero was a rascal, and everybody in the country knows it but yourself."

"Well, but, Meyer," urged Finnerty in his most propitiating manner, "I could not blame the young fellow for wanting to get back to the woman he loved."

"Did he reach his wife," asked the dramatist, eagerly.

"Neither his wife nor Mexico," Finnerty shook his head, sadly. "I have so often thought of his poor young wife and his old father—he never saw them again. You see, the country was so thoroughly aroused, so many people were out on the warpath against the band, that it was impossible to break through the lines. It was only

some twenty-five miles below where I was then living that the young fellow was killed; just who had killed him no one could say, and there was endless wrangling over the blood money. Young Arano was found dying in the thicket where he had dragged himself after receiving his death wound, and all he ever spoke after this, was the name of his wife. 'Inez—Inez—Inez,' he called out three times and never spoke again."

"How tragic!" exclaimed the scribe, adding mentally: "Eureka! I have found it, the name of the bandit bride!" And when he noticed the woman leaning forward, her face blanched, her brows contracted till they formed one straight black line, her teeth set and her eyes ablaze, he inwardly exulted. "Aha!" he said to himself, "heroic as well as sympathetic; I must hold fast this character by all means—just the thing I want for my 'Bandit's Bride.'"

The face of the Southerner was almost as pale as that of the woman in the corner, and the hand he mechanically drew through his beard was trembling. Without knowing it he had so raised his voice that both the Colonel and the dry goods man started from their slumbers; the former fell to putting his left leg in a more comfortable position, the latter to rubbing his eyes and yawning with all his might and main.

Far beneath them lay the ancient town, the walls of the Mission Church of San Juan Bautista gleaming white in the hot sun. The low adobe houses whitewashed, rose embowered, wall encircled, with vines trailing over remada and red-tiled roof had preserved sufficient of the Spanish features to give to the little town the look of enchantment which these places bear—at a safe distance.

Few of the buildings only attain to the dignity of a second story, and one of these was a solid-looking structure, part adobe, part frame—the "hotel" at which the stage was to stop.

The sheep ranges in the immediate neighborhood of the town, still being green, the lower hills surrounding it still clothed in verdure, it was not to be wondered at that the journalist gazed with rapture on the scene as the stage wound along the mountain side. It would not be long now till San Juan would be reached, and again all the inmates of the coach fell to wondering about the solitary lady passenger. Would she stop? Would she go on? Who would help her out?

"Not I," said the Colonel to himself, decisively, "let Southern chivalry unload that stone image."

The dry goods man scanned her once more. She had never been in his store, he knew; why should he bother? His red-headed wife was given to jealousy, and the Colonel—well, the Colonel would have his joke, and would be sure to bring it to her ears. The journalist had long since decided that the Southerner would appreciate the distinction of lifting the only lady from the coach; and he liked the Southerner and felt under obligations to him. Butcher Meyer had not thought of the matter at all; evidently he thought of nothing but "fad caddles" as a general thing; and by this same token he returned to his muttons.

"Dem plasted roppers," he said, more to himself than to any one in particular. "If Finnerty had only caught the young horsethief and got part of the reward."

"Thank you," interrupted Finnerty with marked coldness, "I am no thief catcher!"

"And pesides," continued the aggrieved man of beef, "dey say dat young fellow had $20,000 in gold on him; he was going to take it to Mexico for Vasquez."

"Nonsense," laughed Finnerty, "how could he have carried it? One of the sorrels was stolen by one of the gang, and the other was shot under him."

"Yes, but the money might have been taken by the men that found him and divided up among them—don't you see it? Vat you say, Colonel—hey?" and he nudged the doughty Colonel in the ribs to show on what familiar terms he was with the largest landholder in the Salinas valley.

"Yes, yes, Meyer; I'll bet you the money he got for the five hundred head of 'fad caddles' was among the swag."

Everybody laughed, while everybody was putting his things together preparatory to leaving the stage the moment it should stop.

"But what could have become of it?" queried the dry goods man, who got his things together more quickly than the rest; "they do say that his young lieutenant had been given a large sum of money by Vasquez; he had perfect confidence in him."

"But what could have become of it?" asked the Southerner.

The stage stopped with a jolt; the Colonel was given ample time to climb out comfortably while the rest looked on; and to the Southerner's question the dry goods man replied in an offhand manner:

"Oh—well," as Meyer says, "those who found him went snooks on the loot," and thinking that he, too, had said something funny, he was surprised when he looked into the Southerner's perfectly serious face.

This gentleman was making ready to descend after him, while the journalist sat well back in his seat to intimate that he would be the last to leave the vehicle; and he was startled beyond measure to hear the Southerner enunciate in his quiet tones:

"That cannot be so; for I am the man that found him."

As he sprang lightly to the ground he turned to lift out the lady who had risen from her seat to follow him. For one brief moment her dark, gray orbs met his honest brown eyes, and he felt the pressure of her warm, soft fingers.

Then for the first time she spoke:

"And I am the woman who lost him," she said.

ONE DAY IN JUNE

It was a little aside from the main road that leads through the mountains to Santa Cruz, and the homely, comfortable house, with a broad porch running the full length of the front facing the by-road, had originally been built to accommodate the hands in the Hume saw mill with board and lodgement. Now the mill had been moved "furder down the gulch" in order to procure more plentiful food for its greedy teeth, and Mr. Brown, erstwhile bullwhacker in the employ of the company, had been given this cottage as residence, since the boarding house had followed the mill "furder down the gulch," and Mr. Brown, by reason of increasing years and obesity, had been compelled to lay aside rawhide and blacksnake forever.

The Browns, or more correctly speaking, Mrs. Brown, had nailed, and nailed, and knocked, and hammered around till the old house had become the neat, cozy home it was, and it quite looked the place for the schoolmarm to board at and an occasional tourist to rest in for a few days, while taking views of sylvan scenery and distant coast glimpses.

The water trough in front of the house, with its overhanging willow, seemed as indispensable now as in the earlier days, and when Jim, or Bill, or Dick turned millward in the evening, having delivered their load of lumber at its proper destination, the horses always stopped at the trough, and Miss Brown, fresh, rosy and a little bit freckled, was always on the porch for a chat or a

flirtation. Sometimes Jim, Bill or Dick came back to call, later in the evening, when they were made welcome by Mother Brown, as well as the daughter.

It was Jim who was watering his horse at the trough this evening, and making conversation with Miss Brown, which conversation seemed of so absorbing a nature that the man who came up the road on his wheel was not noticed by either till he stopped near the trough and addressed the teamster.

"Yep," was Jim's reply, "the road you left was the road to Santa Cruz; this yere one takes you down to Hume's mill. But come closter," he continued facetiously, "an' give yer horse a drink. Mebbe you'd like to tie up for the night; mighty good house this, and no other boarders now—'ceptin' the schoolmarm"—with a squint of his mischievous black eyes toward the house.

"Young lady on the porch just now?" asked the stranger, for Miss Brown had vanished, presumably to inform her mother of the new arrival.

"Naw—that was old Pop Brown's daughter; don't ketch her mopin' over an' ole book in a corner when we fellers come round."

It seemed only the right thing to do for the stranger to mount the low steps to the porch and take a cursory look over the place he had been advised to "tie up" at, and he went toward the open door of the hall, or sitting room, whatever it might be termed. Just as he caught sight of a slender, girlish figure, trying to catch the fading light on the page she was reading, and of the stretches of green slope climbing upward to a mountain crowned with dark, sombre redwoods, as seen through the window by which the girl was sitting, another door opened and Mrs.

Brown, ample of proportion, and with a motherly smile on her broad face, stepped into the room.

It would be doing her an injustice to say that she scrutinized her would-be guest very closely, so many had stopped here, some with camera and sketch book, others merely on the way to or from Santa Cruz, on wheel, on foot or on horseback, and all, as far as she could see, dressed in the same kind of grey clothes that this young man wore. During the greeting the stranger had lost sight of the figure by the window, and when he turned again it had gone. Nevertheless, he walked up to the window, and scrutinized closely and with much interest the landscape he saw from there.

At the supper table he found the ladies already seated; there were no introductions; but he seemed a man of resources, and he began a conversation with the **paterfamilias**, which had for its theme the various beauties and advantages which this portion of the Santa Cruz mountains possessed over all other parts of it, turning suddenly with an enthusiastic, "Don't you think so, too, Miss——" to the schoolmarm, seated opposite to him. A pair of soft brown eyes, direct yet with half-timid expression, were raised to his a moment as she supplied the name he did not know—"Watson"; and then were lowered again with maidenly reserve.

These eyes had traveled questioningly across the board once or twice to where the stranger sat, as though something had drawn them there involuntarily; but they were drooped now while he said something flattering to Miss Brown about the effect that the climate had on the good looks of young ladies who had always lived here.

"Yes," affirmed Mrs. Brown, "my daughter Ma-Maud was born and bred in these mountains."

Mr. Brown, in the meantime, had been watching his chance to ask the stranger a question, the answer to which did not reach the schoolmarm's ears; but when he told his wife, soon after, that Mr. Robertson would stay for a day or two, the young girl thought she saw a startled look on the stranger's face, which look changed into an amused smile, before fading away. After the supper dishes had been cleared away, came Jim, Bill and Dick; but no one seemed surprised when the school teacher took up her book again and began to read by the light of the lamp on the dining table, which had been moved back against the wall. No one addressed her, and the company was most ably entertained by the Brown family, without the aid of the young schoolmarm.

As the three young men from the sawmill sat with their chairs tilted back against the wall, the newcomer fell into the ways of the country at once by tilting back his chair too; but the only available spot for this purpose happened to be where his eyes necessarily fell on the young girl dressed in black that sat reading at the table. It was only natural that Mr. Brown should inquire how things were going at the mill, and he was assured that things were running smoothly.

"But, Jim," said Dick, "you didn't tell about the accident Bob had at Krench's mill."

"What was it?" inquired the Brown family in one breath.

"Why, Bob was gettin' out a log on the skid-road, an' the horse slipped and fell right onto him an' broke his leg above the knee."

"What did I always tell you, boys?" wheezed Papa Brown, excitedly. "I tell you horses ain't no good haulin' out logs; oxen's the thing to do it with; they wouldn't be half so many accidents if they'd stick to that."

"You see——" Mrs. Brown turned to explain to the "tenderfoot" (as the boys already had dubbed the stranger), "my husband, Mr. Brown, is known for the best ox-driver that ever handled logs in the whole county of Santa Cruz—isn't it so, boys?"

"Thet's so;" from three distinct voices.

"And he told 'em, when they said he'd better lay off for good, since they were going to use horses now, that there'd be nothing but accidents and runaways on every skid-road in the mountains. But they wouldn't believe him; now they've got it. Why, my husband could make them oxen pull the way no horses ever can pull. He could almost cut 'em in two with the blacksnake, till they'd jest beller; but he made 'em pull, all the same. Horses is no 'count on a skid-road; you can jest take the chain offen the log an' beat 'em half to death with it, and then you can't make 'em pull."

Miss Brown had been smiling for some time, and she now burst into a laugh. "Look at Florence!" she exploded. "Wouldn't you think she was going into conniption-fits? Says she can't bear to see a helpless brute abused; says she'd rather take the beatin' herself."

Jim, Bill and Dick joined in the laugh, while Mrs. Brown explained good-naturedly to the schoolmarm, who, as the stranger noticed, had grown pale and was shivering as though the lash had struck her, that oxen were made to work or get licked if they didn't; and that

Mr. Brown had always fed his critters just as much as they could eat.

"What might your name be?" asked Jim of our friend; he felt better acquainted with him as having met him first in the afternoon.

"Ted," was the pleasant reply.

"Come up here to look for a job?"

"Shouldn't object," was the laconic reply.

"Ever work in timber?"

"Some."

"Did ever you fall any redwoods?" Bill now took up the catechism.

"No—can't say I ever did, but I believe I could do it. My dad was the boss faller over in the redwoods there, for years——," he jerked his head toward the window through which he had looked in the afternoon.

"Fallin' redwoods is no joke," contined Bill, "I'm no slouch at fallin' myself; but I believe the boss would give you a job at fallin' if you come over in the morning." He winked at his two companions.

But he frankly took back whatever he might have said in derision of the tenderfoot, when the young man did go down to the mill in the morning, and in the course of the day made rapid strides toward "fallin'" a good-sized redwood, which none of the others had wanted to tackle alone. He got no job, however, as they were not "short-handed" at the mill. Nevertheless, he staid on at the cottage; paying his board for a week in advance, he borrowed old Brown's gun and delighted Mrs. Brown by bringing home a full game bag every time he went out; and Miss Brown was equally delighted with the bunches

of flowers he brought to her, for Ma-Maud was supposed to be very fond of flowers. The prefix of "Ma" to her name proved to be quite unintentional, as he discovered one day when the old man called his daughter "Matildy," and got an angry look from both mother and daughter for his indiscretion. It was evident that "Maud" had been adopted as a more fashionable name, though they might have shunned that form of it had they known it was really the more old-fashioned of the two. However, Maud-Matilda was happy in the possession of her new-fashioned name and the admiration of the gentlemen who came there.

The schoolmarm came in for very little of the young man's attention, Ma-Maud told her mother with great satisfaction; but it happened one afternoon that he crossed the trail which led up from the bare, unattractive school house to the higher lying Brown cottage. He was in pursuit of game, he frankly averred, but it was evident he had come from the direction of the forest-crowned mountain that rose between the Brown cottage and the bay, and which had attracted his attention that first day of his arrival. He had really come up behind her and had been studying her height, her walk and her carriage, drawing comparisons, perhaps, between her and Maud. She was taller than he had first thought; there was infinite grace in her bearing, and she stepped as lightly as though walking in the paved streets of a city.

There was a start and a flush when he stepped on a crackling bush behind her, and she turned with more pleasure than surprise in her look, he flattered himself. After a few words of greeting he passed on again, and she did not think it necessary or of sufficient importance

to mention the chance encounter to Matilda or her mother.

Lounging in the house one day, when an early morning fog had turned into a dreary rain, he suddenly asked, with an air of a martyr being led to the stake: "Do you want me to go down and carry the schoolmarm's rubber coat and overshoes to her?"

Maud Matilda and her mother both laughed. "You'd get small thanks," the mother said. "Why, she's that high and mighty that Jim and Bill and Dick have just quit entirely offering to escort her or wait on her in any way. She's the proudest I ever saw."

"Wonder what she's proud of?" put in Matilda spitefully. "You know pop is one of the school trustees, and he heard that her people were as poor as church mice, and she puttin' on airs here, and grasping and greedy into the bargain."

"How's that?" asked the young man.

"Well, sir; when she first came here she asked maw if she couldn't have her board cheaper if she gave me lessons after school hours. Think of that, will you?"

The young man seemed speechless with surprise and indignation.

"An', Ma-Maud told her that her eddication was done finished, thank you, an' that she couldn't learn her nothin', nohow."

"Ha—a fitting reply and well expressed," he approved, enthusiastically.

Hours later, when he had convinced himself that the teacher had taken both rain-cloak and rubbers with her in the morning, he looked keenly into her face while he walked beside her a little piece, to trace, if possible, the

lines of greed and avarice in her features. It was the same sweet, pensive face he had looked into on his first arrival, the same soulful eyes that had a look in them half shy, yet very earnest. A question arose to his lips, but he closed them firmly, and he soon left her to walk her way home alone. Late in the evening he, too, reached the haven, with a well-filled game bag.

After this came bright sunny days again; and one Saturday the young man, Ted, with his gun and game-bag to hand, called out to the two young girls who were "doing up" their joint room:

"If I could persuade a couple of young ladies to show me the way to the top of the ridge over yonder, I should try to shoot a grizzly up there."

"Come on, Florence, less go!" cried Matilda; and before she had time to decline the invitation, and while Ma-Maud was "fixin' up," Florence caught a beseeching look from a pair of dark gray eyes; so that when Matilda came down, Florence was already drawing on her gloves.

"What—with that old hat on?" she asked Florence.

The teacher's delicate face flushed. "I could not well put on my black bonnet," she said, simply; and then the three started.

They soon left the school trail and began the ascent on the opposite slope. The feet sank into green mosses, and the ladies' skirts were brushed by ferns and wild flowers. White, pink, purple, blue and yellow, every shade and color was represented in this carpet; anemones, triliums, violets, baby blue-eyes, pimpernel, jack-in-the-pulpit; while farther off, among moldering logs, and in densest solitude, Florence recognized the rarer,

though less color-bright, orchids of the country. Above them and around them sang the birds, robins, thrushes and mockingbirds, first cousins to each other, little blue-breasted birds that live in hills and valleys alike, and the oriole, which lives and sings deep in the heart of the mountains. How beautiful it all was. Once, when Florence stood lost in thought and rapture, the young man sprang quickly to her side.

"Let me help you over, Miss Florence," he said as he took her hands in his and drew her up on a log, buried in ferns and moss, which she had not even seen until now.

But he held her hands longer than there was any need for, though it was some little time before Florence got ready for the leap; she felt so safe with the strong, tender clasp of those other hands about her own. Matilda came up with a bunch of posies stuck in her belt, and they began to ascend the height, first through hazel bushes, wild cherry trees, the native currant, gay with clusters of pink bells, and the ceanothus, the lilac of California, covered with blue, feathery flower-fronds. The tall, slender fir grew above them, and soon the wide-spreading, stately madrone, proud of its dark green shiny leaves and new dress of green and gold, seemed to claim admiration and homage to the exclusion of oak, laurel and pines. But the fir alone had the breeze for a comrade, and their sighs and whisperings were very sweet to listen to.

It is the lighter green and the ever-stirring foliage of these trees that make the great, straight stem, and immovable branches of the giant redwoods so much more impressive when approached thus where they still stand in all their somber majesty; and today again the city-bred girl seemed overawed by their grandeur. She stood

for a moment as on the threshold of a temple, forgetful of the dark, gray eyes that were following every change of expression on her face.

The sun had grown oppressively warm, as it does sometimes in California, even so early in spring. Suddenly a light puff of wind seemed to bring a suggestion of ocean with it, and turning to the East, Florence uttered a cry of delight, changing on the instant almost to one of dismay. She had caught a glimpse of Monterey Bay, and fair Santa Cruz, lying bathed in sunshine, climbing from the bay shore up the green hills; but she had also seen, immediately below her, one of the battlefields of which California has all too many, scenes of slaughter and carnage, where the mutilated, blackened limbs and trunks of giant redwood trees attest the barbarism, the fury of man against his best friend, the sheltering, fostering redwood tree, when he is bent on gain and filled with greed. The young man winced when Florence cried out with flashing eyes and flaming cheeks:

"How can they—oh! how can they! And while they destroy the forest with fire and ax, every living creature in it perishes helpless in the flames——"

Maud Matilda, eminently practical, had been tittering over Florence's "fine frenzy," and now broke out laughing.

"Timber was made to be cut, I say, and they've got to burn out the underbrush before they can cut it, and that's the long and short of it. But that baby," pointing to Florence, "what did she do but pick up a little squirrel that almost had its feet burned off, when they were burning underbrush on one of the timber tracts last year, and

pack it in cotton and nurse it, and feed it with bread and milk, and cry, like the baby she is, when the critter died! Well, I never; I thought I should die a'laughing."

Tears had gathered in Florence's great brown eyes, but the young man did not seem to notice her distress, though his face worked strangely for a moment. Then he declared himself ferociously hungry, and advised the two young ladies to lead him back home in time for lunch, so that he might not grow dangerous.

Looking across to the bay once more where the breeze was curling the blue waters into little white waves, Florence said dreamily:

"Just so we could look down upon San Francisco Bay from the room in the turret at the east end of the house. My mother so loved that window."

"And is your mother there now?" he asked quickly.

"No, oh, no," her voice faltered a little; "after my father's death the house went to strangers. My mother has a little home with her sister now, and I help take care of her," she added, not without pride.

Again a queer look came into the man's face, and he was evidently forcing back a word that rose to his lips. But one of his quick, keen glances flew across to Florence's face.

Had Florence ever been in touch with her landlady and her daughter, she must have noticed a certain coolness and restraint on the part of both, which would have found its explanation in certain confidences exchanged between mother and daughter, just after the memorable morning's walk. The outcome of these deliberations was a "talk" rather forced on the young man, Ted,

though he accepted it gracefully and rather more gratefully than they ever knew.

There must be some reason for his still "hangin' round," the mother had convinced herself after his efforts to find a job had failed. He paid his board with scrupulous regularity, and a man with such shoulders and such ready hands would be sure to find work somewhere even if not right here. Considering all these things within herself, Mother Brown thought it well to intimate that her daughter had been brought up to be a helpmate to a man who had only a cottage to offer, and the labor of his hands, as well as to adorn the palace of a wealthy man, should it be her lot to marry one.

"She ain't like some other girls I know of; there's that little schoolmarm now. What's she got to be proud of, I'd like to know, and I've heerd her, with my own ears, say she would rather die than marry a poor man. What d'ye think of that, now?"

"It's preposterous!" exclaimed the young man with honest indignation.

He joined Matilda on the front porch where she was engaged churning butter, and he told her with his brightest smile that he was famishing for a glass of buttermilk, and that he would promise to go out and kill something for supper if he got it in time.

He did go out after lunch and shoot something, but he hid gun and game bag before he waylaid the schoolmarm on her way home.

"How can she be mercenary and calculating with that soft bright light in her eyes?" he asked himself, half aloud.

He had studied the approaching figure so intently that

he forgot his usual courtesy, and stared at her instead of paying his respects or greeting her. Her face, timidly happy, grew troubled.

"You are tired," he said quickly, as he took basket and school books from her. "It is not an easy task for you, the walk to and from the school, the school itself, and these uncongenial surroundings."

She sighed deeply, "That is the curse of poverty."

"It is harder to bear for a woman to be sure, than for a man. While we have health and youth we care little whether we lay up for the future or not. But poverty comes hard to you?" he asked as his keen gray eyes searched her face.

There was an added look of sorrow on her down-bent face and she clasped her hands with a gesture of despair.

"My father preferred death to poverty, and the last wish he wrote down was that I might never know poverty through marrying a penniless man."

The gray eyes that seemed to fathom men's souls could express tenderness and sympathy, too, and he asked quickly, "Your father was——"

"Abner Watson, the bankrupt suicide, yes."

"Poor child," he muttered, "poor child; and do those people know about it?" he asked with a nod in the direction of the Brown cottage.

"No; only Mr. Blank was told by the old friend who got me the school."

"What a burden those slender young shoulders have had to bear," he said it more to himself than to her, but when she shyly glanced up, his eyes held hers in a long, tender look.

He came home long after she had arrived there and

had put by her basket and school books; and that night, when Jim, Bill and Dick again called, he no longer wondered at the quiet black-robed figure sitting apart from all with an open book in her hand. Only once did the young girl look up hastily from her book. Ted had been asked by Bill whether he had yet found a job at fallin' timber, to which the young man replied that he intended starting out tomorrow to see if he could find some other job. Ma-Maud and her mother were looking significantly at each other, so that neither noticed the startled look on Florence's face, nor the reassuring glance that flew back from the young man's eyes.

"I am coming back, though," he went on. "I think I can get a job from a friend of the old man's; he's got some timber, off in that direction."

Neither of the young lumbermen took much notice of the gesture; they had agreed among themselves not to take this chap seriously, more especially as he had shown dangerous symptoms of being attentive to Maud.

The days dragged wearily along for poor Florence, when he had gone away. To be sure, he was poor, and he could never be anything to her; but she kept listening for a quick crackling of the brush wood on her way home from school, and she missed the firm step that passed over the porch into the sitting room and out again, till it came to a sudden stop when she had been spied, half-hidden in some corner with her book as a shield against all attacks—conversational and every other kind. He had never sought her out in her corner except in the presence of Matilda and her mother; but she had never felt friendless or forlorn through all those weeks that he had been an inmate of the Brown cottage. Her

cheeks grew pale with waiting. Again the redwoods were her best friends, for she was constantly at the window, where he had first seen her, looking across the slope and up to the forest-crowned hill.

One day Pop Brown went on business to Santa Cruz and came back so swelled up with news that he wheezed and choked in his attempt to tell it all at once.

"What d'ye think—if I didn't see Ted Robertson in town looking just too big and important for anything. Wanted to dodge me fust off, I think, for he had some real tony-lookin' fellers with him. But I goes right up, slaps him on the shoulder an' sez I, 'Hello, Ted,' an' sez he, 'why, here's Pop Brown,' an' then he turned to another young feller an' sez he, 'Mr. Bolles, this is Mr. Brown, the gentleman as knows all about lumber and the prices of it.' Then he takes me aside, an' he sez, 'Pop Brown, this is just the best thing I ever struck; that young man is an articheck, he's a schoolmate o' mine, an' he's goin' to give me a job on a fancy cottage he's laid off to build right close in yer neighborhood. Now, you give him advice in regard to where he's to get the lumber, for he's a first rate fellow, and not at all stuck up. Yes sir," continued Pop Brown, bridling with importance, "that there city-articheck he come to me an' I jest told him what lumber to get and where to get it, and he says he's coming to see the ladies, too."

"Well, I declare!" and "He—he—he—he—I know'd all along he was coming here again," were the comments Florence heard in two different keys, but she herself said never a word. She held her book, though, in such a clutch that one would have thought there was imminent danger of its taking immediate flight if not held by

main force. When the others noticed her at last, Maud went over the whole story again and had a most attentive listener in Miss Watson.

Within the week loads and loads of lumber, of shingles, of tongued and grooved "stuff," of surfaced stuff and every other known kind of stuff used for building was on the ground where the cottage was to stand, which, from Pop Brown's description must have been up among the forest trees bordering the redwood tract which the two young ladies had visited together with Mr. Ted.

Day after day passed, and though Florence had so far resisted Maud Matilda's importunities that they go up there and see what was going on, her heart did draw her, too, in that direction. But she conquered herself, though on her walks to and from the school she always stopped on the trail where it was crossed by that other trail that had taken them up toward the mountain that day. Not that she ever expected to see him walking rapidly toward her again, with gun and game bag, or that she ever expected to hear the undergrowth crackle close behind her again—but it did—or was it only her imagination? A deadly pallor lay on her face a moment and she staggered so that only a strong, outstretched arm saved her from falling.

"Poor little girl," said a pitying, soothing voice. "Did you miss me, Florence?" He turned the flushing face gently toward him.

"Every day of my life since you went away," came in a whisper from her trembling lips.

"Be a brave girl now," he said cheerily, but he himself cast an apprehensive glance in all directions. "I shall

arrive some time this evening, but you need not herald my coming."

And he was gone so quickly that she thought it was all a dream. And he came up to the door on his wheel that evening just as he had done before, and there were more "Well—I declare's," and more "He—he—he—he's" as he crossed the threshold. After the first greeting was over, Ma-Maud generously went to the foot of the stairs and called up:

"Florence, come down and see Ted; he's come back and he's going to stay."

But Florence declined to come, and Mrs. Brown explained that she was such a puny thing—had come home with a headache in the afternoon. Next morning she was told all the news; Ted and the "articheck" were to board here, while for the ten other men a Chinese cook and a tent had been provided. They seemed in a great hurry about putting up the house, and Ted had said he intended to work overtime all he could while the job lasted.

He was as good as his word, for he was always at work; and the young "articheck" seemed just as busy as any of the carpenters. The architect too was looked upon with disfavor by Jim, Bill and Dick; and Pop Brown, they said, was "gettin' too stuck up for any use, to say nothin' of the women folks." Ted tried to propitiate them, and partly succeeded with the aid of the young architect, who was "Charley" with the whole crowd. He said, one evening, that the owner of the house had written about his housekeeper coming up with the furniture, to fix up things and take charge until he re-

turned from the East, so that the house would be all ready for him.

"And boys," he went on slapping Jim on the shoulder, "tell you what we'll do. The housekeeper is a good woman, and when I was in town the other day I told her I had some friends up here who wanted to see the house, and that I'd like to have a little spread to set before them when they'd climbed the hill. So she said to me that if she could move in soon, and get the furniture in, that I might invite all my friends and she would promise the finest kind of a spread. See?"

"We too?" asked Mother Brown, indicating the entire family with a sweep of her hand.

"Certainly; it was all arranged for you as a surprise; that is why we have never asked the ladies to invite us so far."

Matilda Maud seemed concerned about the schoolmarm as usual, "You'll be gone away by that time, won't you Florence?"

"Where would she go?" asked Mr. Bolles in evident alarm.

"She goes home to her mother for the summer vacation," explained Mrs. Brown.

"When is that?" asked Mr. Bolles again.

"In June," said Florence simply.

"Oh, well; this picnic will be one day in June, in early June; and you will stay till then? Thank you."

There was general satisfaction all around, and when Jim, Bill and Dick went home that night they concluded the "articheck" was not half bad, and it was well that the young fellow Ted had been shown his place at last; never had been anything but an underling, nohow. His

dad boss-faller in the redwoods 'over there'—and Bill described a complete circle with his hand; "I'll bet neither he nor his dad ever fallen a redwood in all their life."

Work on the cottage was "rushed like mad," Mrs. Brown observed, and neither Ted nor the architect ever came over for lunch now, but took their bite with the other men. Two more men had come from the city to do painting and finishing, and the day for the picnic came nearer.

Florence was always alone now, going to school and coming back. That was what poverty meant, she said to herself bitterly, to work and work always for enough to keep one alive, and never a moment to spare for any of the joys or pleasures of life. So she went wearily back and forth, and Ted, poor fellow, saw the roses fading from her cheeks again, but could say no word to comfort her.

June had come, and it would be only a question of a few days now till she went home to her mother—and she reproached herself for the sigh that escaped her as she thought of it. One evening Mr. Bolles came home earlier than usual, bringing the tidings that Mrs. Miller had come, and all would be ready for their entertainment at the new house on Saturday next. Ted saw the color creep into Florence's face, and he slept sounder that night than for many a night before.

June in California, in the Santa Cruz mountains, is always a dream of Paradise, and this day in June was more perfect than the rest, if possible. The three knights of the skid-road were on hand bright and early having "laid off for a day" from mill-work and from teaming, in order

to do honor to the "articheck's" invitation. Pop Brown, with the partner of his joys and sorrows, had decided to drive up by the rather rough road which the lumber teams had worn into the mountain side. All the rest walked; and as Ma-Maud felt the importance of having the bossman for her escort, as well as the responsibility of looking after the comfort and amusement of the other three swains, Ted and the schoolmarm were left to their own devices; they cut no figure in this show at all.

How Ted's face had lighted up when his eyes greeted Florence. Florence,—no longer clad in somber black, but daintly beautiful in white organdie, overstrewn with delicate lilac leaves and sprays, half transparent, so that satiny shoulders and well-rounded arms shone through. A white hat with black plumes sat lightly on her dark hair; and the young man thought he had never before beheld so fair a vision.

Ma-Maud fluttered and wavered about in front of them like some bird of gorgeous plumage of pink and green, blue and yellow, all combined; and the young architect paid respectful attention to this combination of colors, so much so that she never once thought of looking back for Florence.

Florence's thoughts went back to the day they had walked here before. They looked again for the tiny wild flowers, but they found instead the brilliant aquilegia, the cynoglossum, with its tall stalk supporting clusters of dark blue flowers; the lovely harebell in tints of pink and silver; the big Solomon's seal—representing the lily-of-the-valley of colder climes, and the native crown-imperial, the bell-hung fritellaria—all shades of bronze, of green and brown, mixed in the flowers. The mocking-

bird, the robin, the oriole, were all on hand again; and far away, like the sad refrain to some gay song, came the plaintive cry of the mourning dove to its mate.

Florence stood with clasped hands. "This alone has kept me from losing hope all through the long weary months I have lived here. Goethe tells us that every day of our life we must heed some little poem, or follow the thoughts of some great master in music or the arts; and this has been my poem and my reading—for Nature was before art, and it is poetry itself, always, if we will but read it aright."

Ted seemed to awaken with a sigh. "Ah, yes; you have lived a dreamy life here among these people who would set Shakespeare and all the nine Muses to 'fallin' timber,' if they should ever venture into this neck o' woods."

"And they would put loggin' chains on Pegasus and make him 'snake out' logs on the skid-road," laughed Florence.

They had hold of each other's hands and were going along like two happy children out for a holiday.

"Florence," he said suddenly, "we must not part again —we must belong to each other."

Her face fell, "O, Teddy—we are both poor. I know you are capable, both head and hands, but the poor working man is always at the mercy of the rich. And they would not let me keep my school if—if I married."

Perhaps it was just as well that she did not see the conceited smile with which he looked down upon her from his height of six feet. Within himself he said: "So, so; she has thought this thing over seriously;" but aloud he said: "The unfortunate circumstances surrounding

your father's death have made you morbid; but I will try to educate you out of your gloomy views, my little girl. Let us hurry now; I am anxious you should see the house I have built."

He had led her around by a steep little pitch she had not climbed the last time; but suddenly, when she reached the top, there lay the little fairy castle, white and shining under the waving, arching boughs of madrone, of oak, of fir and laurel; while on the north close-serried ranks of giant redwoods promised brave shelter from both sun and storm.

The others soon came up, and together they explored farther. When they turned to the eastern entrance Florence uttered an exclamation of surprise. The veranda here ran close up to a turret, from which one broad window overlooked the Bay of Monterey.

"It's like the old home!" she cried; and then she was silent, for they were all there together, staring at her.

As they mounted the wide steps to the veranda, the hall door opened and an elderly woman greeted them cordially, and bade them welcome. The "articheck" with Ma-Maud on his arm crossed the threshold first, drawing the three mill cavaliers after them. Just now Mr. and Mrs. Brown arrived, and Ted offered his aid to them, which prevented him from joining those in the house. The Browns, too, entered, and found that good, kind Mrs. Miller was ready and willing to show everything in the house, even giving the prices of things, to Mrs. Brown's unspeakable satisfaction. To be sure, the hardwood hall, without carpet, did not meet with her approval, though the mats and rugs went for something. But the drawing room!—the velvet carpet, the furniture

covered with satin, the fine lace window curtains, the ornaments, the mirrors, the onyx stands and the grand piano—there was something worth looking at.

Then came the dining room, and the treasures here displayed to them quite took away the breath of mother and daughter. Cut class, hand painted china, silverware, table linen—it all needed close inspection, and Mrs. Miller seemed to have lots of time. Bill, who had remained in the parlor trying the tone of the piano and working the pedals as he would the treadle of an organ, was evidently enjoying himself to Mrs. Miller's content; but when she heard Jim slowly climbing the stairs leading above, she flew out of the dining room and captured the youth by main force and with the sweetest smile. She could not think of his going any farther until he had partaken of a light collation, which would be served as soon as the ladies had inspected the silver. And dinner would be served later, as she must insist on the pleasure of their company for the whole day.

Dick, in the meantime, had clambered up on the top of the balustrade of the veranda, from whence he was about to raise himself to the window ledge of the broad turret window. But the heel of the gymnast was held as in a vice suddenly, and the "articheck" called out cheerily.

"Hold on, Dick; the women are going to have some chicken-fixins in the dining room, and we want our share because Mrs. Miller will have a high-toned dinner in the afternoon. She says we've got to stay all day, and I think it's a pretty good place to stay—hey?"

Pop Brown himself was snoozing in a corner of the drawing room, after a comfortable drink Mrs. Miller had urged upon him. And while the entire lot of aborigines

was corralled in the house below, Ted, who had not been missed any more than Florence, led this young lady upstairs to point out to her, from the window in the turret room, where the City of the Holy Cross was lying, gleaming, light and fair, in the distance.

Florence could not wonder enough; here again was the large, wide window, draped above, and admitting two arm chairs, a large one and a small one, into its depth—just as at home.

"And you like it?" asked Ted.

"It is like a dream," she said uneasily, holding the hand he had pased over her hair.

"Good little girl," he said; but he no longer contented himself with stroking her hair—he bent over and kissed her.

"Florence," he continued, "I'm afraid I've lied to you."

She sprang up. "Oh, Teddy, you do not love me?"

"Teddy," he repeated after her; "You speak the name as if you liked it, and I am almost reconciled to my mother for having given me the name. Theodore—a fine name for a double-fisted six-footer like myself."

"But you were not a six-footer when your mother gave you the name. She may have considered you a gift of God; do you not say that women are a bundle of illusions and sentimentalities."

"And your Teddy, I fear, is a bundle of prevarications." He seated himself in the large arm chair, held her close to him and pointed down to the long slope where the great, black stumps and half-burnt trees made a blotch on the landscape.

"I said once, within your hearing, that my father had been the 'boss-faller' in this redwood region, and I partly

spoke the truth. That is his work. To be sure he did not 'fall' the timber himself, but he had it cut, years ago, and he sent me up here to see about cutting down this other tract——"

"O, Teddy," she could only repeat in a maze of dread and wonder.

"If it had not been for a silly girl, who cries when she sees a redwood fall, and wants grizzlies, rattlesnakes, deer, wild cats, squirrels and the birds of the air warned off the premises before the torch is applied to burn out the underbrush, I should have carried out my father's wishes. But when I had once looked into your eyes, and when I heard old man Brown dub me Mr. Robertson, I could not resist the temptaton of masquerading under that name for awhile. I had told him I was John Roberts' son; but I am thankful he misunderstood me; for I wanted you to learn to love me as I loved you. When I was satisfied of this I went back to my father, and he did not hesitate to give me what I asked; the great tract of redwood and this house to bring you to as my wife. Your mother has promised my mother that she will live with us here, for mother thinks you are too young to take proper care of her boy. Can you be happy with her here?"

"Happy! Yes—all the days of my life; but Teddy—one thing alone troubles me now; those redwoods that your father gave you—will you surely never, never cut them down?"

"I can't," he said solemnly. "I couldn't if I wanted to, for I've joined the Sempervirens Club, and I'm pledged to "save the redwoods."

CAN DEAD MEN TELL NO TALES?

Some people see ghosts in broad daylight, but I saw mine by lamp light, one summer's eve between nine and ten o'clock.

It was on the outskirts of the city, and we had lately moved there because the street where we had been living had become a business street and the rents had grown too high for our slender means; and we just happened on the place.

Only we two youngest were left in the home nest with mother; my sister, about eleven, and myself two years older; and no matter where mother went, we two were always by her side. It was springtime, and we girls, with an inborn love for trees and flowers and grassy meads, besought mother to go into the country with us, for the summer at least. The house agent to whom we went, took our measure with a politely insolent air; asked us, in a by-the-way kind of tone, where we resided at present, and when mother gave him street and number, and mentioned the name of one or two neighbors, he dropped the insolent tone and grew benevolent and confidential.

Though mother hesitated, Mr. Tully knew what powerful allies he had in us two girls, and after describing the large garden with trees and shrubs, he seized his hat and said we had better see it before some one came who wanted a suburban residence. It was long before the era of electric roads or even street cars; but we were quite satisfied with the big yellow omnibus that carried us out till we had only a short distance farther to walk.

My sister and I were wild with delight when he stopped at the gate in a tolerably high paling fence, directly opposite to the entrance door of the house, a white cottage with two windows on the right of the door—north of it—and an odd little nook at this same end of the house, which looked as if it ought to have been a corner porch or a balcony, because the wall of another room, back of the parlor, projected out just far enough to form the correct angle. The flower garden in front was only a narrow strip; but lilac bushes and roses were full of promise, and a border of daisies, violets and primulas in bloom, ran along under the parlor windows up to the fence which cut off the garden suddenly from the little space I spoke of before, where I thought belonged a porch or a balcony. This little piece, longer than it was wide, was bare except for a scraggy snowball bush and a piece of sickly ivy.

On the other side of the house, south of it, was a large grass plot, with groups of poplar and locust trees, and we girls were not so old but that we sighed for a swing among these trees. Mother, however, was not so enthusiastic over the place. I saw her shake her head once or twice, when my sister and I were in the greatest raptures. And what beautiful furniture there was in the parlor! Velvet carpet, and curtains of brocaded silk in dark green, with a brighter tint here and there, and the furniture covered with dark green satin. On the mantle of white marble were Parian vases, with bisque ornaments between, as was the fashion those days. But there was no broad mirror here, as there should have been; and the pier-glass between the two windows was covered entirely with a thin pink gauze.

On the opposite wall hung three pictures in handsome gold frames, the one in the center containing an oval, a child's form. The face of its mother was of fresh, pleasing beauty; the father's face had an ugly frown. Above the center table hung a chandelier, and Mr. Tully requested that it should not be lighted. Mother assured him that the room would be but little used, to my great regret, for I thought it charming, in spite of the heavy curtains that made it rather dark.

"But here," I said, "is another window"; and I went up to a long French window, over which the rouleau was drawn to the very ground, and the curtain fell in extra heavy folds. "We can open this and step right out on the porch—oh! I know—that is the place where the balcony ought to be."

But Mr. Tully had arrested my hand. "You must not try to open it," he said hastily, "you see it is fastened down. Come and see the rest of the house."

I was on my guard after this; I had seen mother's brows contract, and one more prohibitory remark might decide her against taking the house. The dining room was equally pretty, was lighter and more cheerful, and Mr. Tully made us girls understand that we could pull things to pieces here if we wanted to. There were pleasant, cozy rooms enough for our own furniture to fill, so that the bedroom in which the little child had died would never be missed.

Mr. Tully, however, led us into this room, too, and the first thing I noticed was a long French window, similar to that in the parlor, and giving out on the same queer space where the balcony should have been. Without a word, mother saw to it that the windows were well

fastened, and after leaving the room, handed Mr. Tully the key, requesting him to take it with him. Then she requested that Mr. Tully should lock up the parlor also; but this brought violent protests. From myself in the first place, from Mr. Tully in a milder form. He was so glad to know his friend's house was in such good care, he said, that he could not bear to deprive the young ladies of the use of the parlor.

Early the next morning we took possession. Mr. Tully was on hand; and before he left he pointed to a large, pretentious-looking house, with a cupola, on the other side of the street. This house stood back in well-kept grounds, and the gate, with its tall posts, must have been just in the middle of the block, as the street lamp stood right in front of it; for although the street had only recently been cut through what had been the residence grounds of one of the old St. Louis families, who owned slaves enough to keep the extensive gardens in condition the thoroughfare was, nevertheless, macadamized and paved, and lighted by lamps for a block or two farther down. Pointing to this house then, Mr. Tully said:

"Mr. St. Denis bought this place of the gentleman who owned that, also. I will ask the old darkey who has always been gardener here, to come over occasionally to look after your flower beds. The mansion is at present occupied as a fashionable boarding house, and Pompey is a kind of major-domo on the premises. He's a free nigger, but he knows his place."

Mr. Tully sailed across the street, after bidding us adieu, and it was not long before Pompey stuck his head in at the door, scraping his foot out behind, and tugging at the front of his grizzled wool when he saw mother.

"Marse Tully said you done come here to live, Ma'm," he said, politely. "Anything I can do for you or the young ladies?"

"Thank you, Uncle"; mother replied; "the men have placed all the furniture."

"My name's Pomp, Ma'm. I's a free nigger, and I laid out these grounds for Marse Henry Gratiot, years ago, and always took care of 'em; and when Marse St. Denis bought this place, I took care of it, too. Would the young ladies like some fuchsias and heliotropes set out in the garden here? I's got some over in the hot house."

Mother said it must have been a beautiful place when the Gratiots lived here; to which Pomp replied that they had not lived here of late years.

"Marse Edward," he went on, "that is Mr. St. Denis, kept this place for ever so many years; the Belvidere—did never you hear of it? A mighty fine place it was while Marse Edward was landlord, and before the streets were cut through and it was divided up. But the St. Denises never lived in the Belvidere, the big house; they always lived in this cottage, you know. The madam never went near the other house, in fact. We had a fine French cook over there; she was an Irish woman, and her old mother lives down the street here a piece now. There were plenty of darkies, young and old, to wait on the company, and I kinder looked after the whole lot of 'em. I's a old man now, and I'll never see such times again as we had here then."

Mother had listened attentively, but with contracted brows, and when Pompey got through, she asked him to look after things on the place a little, which seemed greatly to please the kindly old negro.

The day was spent in setting things to rights in the rooms we meant to occupy; and in the cool of the evening we sat out on the front doorsteps. The garden here, as I said before, was but narrow, and the gate was not twenty feet away from the stoop; and as my sister and I had been spending the day in making enjoyable discoveries everywhere, we now looked around to see what we could discover without leaving the doorsteps.

Suddenly I caught sight of a most striking figure coming up the pavement from the direction south of us, opposite to the direction in which the omnibus had brought us in the morning. The woman was tall, though leaning on a stick or crutch for support; quite handsome she must have been in her younger days, though there was something about her forbidding rather than commanding. She looked imposing, however, in spite of a frilled cap, a rusty black gown, and an old shawl twisted around her shoulders. As she moved forward slowly, evidently lame in one foot, I could hear her mumbling to herself as very old people are apt to do. I called mother's attention to the woman, who, in the meantime, had come almost opposite to the gate.

Looking up, the woman started back with a cry of dismay, but recovering herself quickly, she brought her stick down on the pavement with a smart blow and leaned on it with both hands, while she eyed us keenly, but not impertinently. Her words, at least, went to show that all impertinence was out of the question.

"Ah, woe is me—woe is me!" she muttered to herself. "And have I kept my trust so badly to my poor dead child? Life in this house where only death should reign!"

I had started up in fright, but mother held out her hand to keep me quiet; and the queer old woman, in a perfectly rational manner, and with an accent that was just brogue enough to make it pathetic, addressed mother:

"And sure then, my good lady, I'm not out of my mind as your children do be thinking; it is surprised I am to see any one living in this house again."

"Why so?" asked mother, quickly. "We rented the house for the summer and may remain through the winter, unless Mr. St. Denis should return from France and come to live here again."

"Edward St. Denis come here to live again? Never in that house—never in that house!" And raising her stick as if it had been the wand of an evil fairy, she shook it at the house above our heads, muttering imprecations in her weird way till I trembled with fear and excitement.

A moment later she had hobbled on past the house and up the street till she turned the next corner. As a child even I had been nervous—although this word had never formed a place in mother's vocabulary—and mother, to divert my thoughts, perhaps, proposed that we, too, should walk to the corner of the street to see where the queer Meg Merrilies had gone. In sauntering along I saw that the piece of ground adjoining ours, was merely a grassy field in an enclosure, without any building on it, whatever. There were groups of trees, as on our grass plot; and in the background I noticed a little sheet of water overhung by a circle of weeping willows, their heavy boughs almost touching the dark surface. It was evidently part and parcel of the same estate on which

stood our cottage and the Belvidere, now a fashionable boarding house.

"There is Meg Merrilies now," my sister pointed to her; "and she is leading a cow. No doubt she keeps her on this grass."

"Meg Merrilies with the cow" was more sociable. In response to our queries she said:

"I'm a poor widow woman, and old; and all I have is what my granddaughter earns and what I can get by selling milk. But there are not many neighbors to sell milk to, and I cannot work on account of my lame foot; so it's a struggle to make both ends meet."

She stood on the edge of the pavement leaning against the cow that stood in the street, and I said how gentle the cow was. The frown left the old woman's brow at last; and before we parted we had made two bargains with her; we were to be supplied with milk from her cow, and Nora, her granddaughter, was to come every Saturday and Monday to do washing and scrubbing at our house.

Nora proved to be a big, stout girl, though hardly as old as I was. She was thoroughly good-natured and childlike, and not above playing a game of marbles with my sister, when her work was done. The fact is, they soon acted like a pair of tomboys, stretched out on their stomachs on a nice, level piece of ground near the back porch, kicking up their heels and shouting with glee. As for myself, I had never played a game of ball or marbles in my life, and I generally sought the precincts of the parlor that so enchanted me. It was simply perfect, I thought; I had never seen anything finer. Even the dim light suited me as it sifted in through the heavy green curtains, and I used to bury myself in a fanteuil that

stood directly opposite to the long pierglass. Not for the purpose of gazing at myself, though, for the heavy center table, with its gold embroidered cover, just under the chandelier, stood between the glass and me; and the glass, moreover, was covered with a thin pink gauze. But I kept gazing all around the room, still discovering some new beauty. The room was longer than it was wide. Entering from the hallway—the only entrance or exit to the room now—you looked straight against the north wall, which was narrow and entirely taken up by the fireplace and the French window nearest the front wall of the house, in which were the two windows between which the pierglass hung.

"But there ought to be a looking glass over the mantlepiece, too," I mused; and my eyes traversed the small space between the mantle and the long French window, and then traveled over the corner till they reached the wall close to the window on the left of the pierglass, where they were caught by something I had never seen there before, and which filled me with such horror that I sprang up and made for the door.

As luck would have it, mother was just passing through the hall, and she asked me what was the matter.

"Look!" I burst out— "Do you see that mark there? It is just as if a man, struck to death, had leaned against the wall for support and had fallen forward—like this. The paper is torn, and there is a smear of blood on it—is there not?"

Mother quietly approached the spot, looked at it attentively and then led me out of the room.

"You are always seeing ghosts," she said, impatiently.

"There is nothing there at all; but this is the last of that fine parlor." And she locked the door and put the key in her pocket.

"Meg Merrilies with the cow"—in common life called Mrs. MacNamara, had fallen into a way of leaning over our front gate of an evening on her way to bringing home her bovine friend. We were always out on the front-door steps as soon as it was cool enough, and as the street was as quiet as any country lane, we had many a chat with her. The main thoroughfare from the town of Carondelet lay one block to the east, and only occasionally did carriage or buggy pass this street, while foot-passengers were still more rare.

According to Mrs. MacNamara's story there had been more life here before the street was opened, when the young bloods with their fine horses and dashing companions had thronged the grounds of the Belvidere establishment. Laughter and song could be heard in the shady walks all day long, and at night there were dancing and music—not to forget the grand suppers served, and for the cooking of which her daughter, their "French" cook, had become famous. The daughter's husband, Nora's father, had been porter and night watchman and, as she hinted, had been Mr. Edward's right hand, as her daughter had been devoted to Mrs. St. Denis, though she had nothing to do with anything going on in this cottage, where the family had always lived.

"And both Nora's parents are dead?" asked mother, one day, when she spoke of Nora as an orphan.

"That's more than I know," the old woman answered with a frown. "I buried my daughter a year ago, soon after the St. Denises left for France. Mrs. St. Denis

faded away like a flower, after the death of her baby, and my daughter—rest her soul—used to sit up with her at night, after her hard day's work, just to keep the poor lady from grieving her heart out, till they could get ready to go. But as for Nora's father, bad luck to him! he left the country before the St. Denises did."

In the meantime Pompey did not neglect us. He had brought the heliotropes and fuchsias, according to promise, and I had come into the front garden with him to see him plant them. Deliberating upon the best place to put them, I suggested the little odd corner I spoke of before, the space where I thought a balcony should have been, and upon which opened the nailed-down French window in the parlor, and the corresponding one in the bedroom, where the little child had died.

"This snowball bush will never thrive here," I argued; "nor that ivy, though this is the north side of the house. Perhaps you did not spade up the garden this spring," I suggested, with the smartness of my thirteen years.

"No, miss, no;" he answered in evident trepidation. "Dunno nothing 'bout the garden in the corner here; never planted them things thar; Marse Edward used to have notions of his own."

"It is a pity," I went on, "that they did not build a little balcony here; it is just the nook for it."

"Was one thar, Miss; but Marse Edward pulled it down, and Johnsing, Nora's father, he planted them things thar." He seemed quite excited over it in his anger—which I fancied he held against "Johnsing" for interfering with his gardening monopoly.

The fact of mother having locked up the parlor soon came to the ears of Meg Merrilies, through her grand-

daughter, and the old woman seemed very much pleased with this deed.

"It's right ye are, my good lady," she applauded mother's action. "'Tis a fine room, but not the place for a young girl to sit and dream in." And then it came out that during Belvidere days that lovely room, in this homelike cottage, had been a quiet little gambling saloon.

After this disclosure, I knew that the days we should spend here were numbered, but did not think how few they were.

It was while the air was heavy with the perfume of jessamine, and the roses were still in full bloom, that we sat one evening as usual on the front doorstep. At the end of days when Nora had washed or cleaned up house for us, she remained for supper and rarely went home before bedtime. As it was after nine o'clock, she was reluctantly tearing herself away from her tomboy playmate, and stood behind my sister, her back to the house under the parlor window. My sister, too, sat with her face to the street, as did mother and I, but on the other side of the doorway. There was no light in the house, but the street lamp in front of the former Belvidere, now the boarding house, across the way, made it quite light, and there were more street lamps up and down the thoroughfare for some distance. The night was still, and we could hear the footsteps of the people that went to the boarding house and from it. I was sitting in front of mother, one step lower down, with my elbow on her knee, and the start I gave caused her to look up and say, apprehensively, "What's the matter?"

"Look, look—" I whispered, "see that man—with a

glazed cap on—don't you see him? Oh, now, he is gone!"

Mother had risen hastily, and looked with all her eyes to where I pointed; but she only shook her head; she had had her own trouble with me before.

"I see nothing," she said positively. "You fell asleep and you were dreaming."

"No"; I said, just as positively; "Amy, Nora—did you not seen the man? He came from there"—I pointed north —"passed by the gate and walked about twenty steps, and then he was gone."

But they both laughed at me. "You had gone to sleep", my sister said. "If anyone had passed we should have heard him if we had not seen him, unless it was a ghost."

And as the word was spoken, Nora said, with a quick start, "I must be going now; grandmother will be looking for me", and away she darted.

Mother wanted that we, too, should go in and go to bed. But she found me suddenly, and not for the first time, stubborn and intractable, for I did not know enough to know that I was on the verge of a fit of hysterics. I would not go to bed; I would not go into the house; no— no— no! I cried louder and louder. And here came help for me. Mrs. MacNamara, every inch Meg Merrilies again, hobbling up as if the wings of Mercury had been fastened to her stick. Nora opened the gate for her, and again she raised her wand and shook it at the house, wierdly and threateningly.

"It's come at last—at last!" she cried. "The place is cursed! Murder was done here, and the house is

haunted!" Then controlling herself forcibly, she turned to me.

"And was it that poor little baby's wraith ye saw," she asked, "or was it the shadow of the murdered man?"

"The man!" I cried eagerly, "the man."

But mother interposed, laying her hand on my arm, to lead me away, and she said in the most matter-of-fact way, "Come, Mrs. MacNamara, don't make the girl believe she has seen a ghost."

Meg Merrilies too laid her hand on my arm.

"Speak, girl, what was he like?" And mother herself was carried away for the moment and listened intently to what I said.

"The man was not very tall; his head was only well above the fence, and he had on a glazed cap——"

"But his hair?" urged the old woman breathlessly.

"There were brown curls under his cap," I answered; and she swayed to and fro, leaning on her stick as she muttered to herself:

"'Tis he— 'tis he; poor Tom Lavigne. And how was he dressed?" she persisted; and without the least hesitation, I replied:

"He had on a short, loose coat, black; but his pantaloons were light gray cloth."

"But child," said mother, with one more attempt to make the matter a commonplace one, "did you ever see this man before?"

"Yes, mother; I saw him in the looking glass the day I told you about the smear of blood on the wall paper in the parlor."

Then mother, too, turned pale, though she still said I had been dreaming, and that Mrs. MacNamara was childish. Nevertheless, I carried my point, which was that Nora stay with us overnight, and that we all four sleep in one room together. How the others slept, I don't know; but I fell at once into the deep lethargic sleep which was always brought on by fright or excitement, and which mother so dreaded to see.

In the bright light of the morning I was myself half inclined to believe I had only dreamed about the man with the glazed cap. As mother said nothing, I too, was careful not to mention the subject, for oh! I did so love that place and wanted to stay there. I noticed that Pompey, when he came in the course of the day to see if we wanted anything from downtown, was intercepted by mother and did not get a glimpse of me. Brave as I was all through the day, my spirits sank as night approached, and when Mrs. MacNamara passed on her way to bring home her cow, I asked her to let Nora come over in the evening, to which she readily consented, adding:

"And I'll be coming after her when it is time to go home."

That was what I had wanted, to have them both there, for I was beginning to feel horribly afraid. Mother said she had letters to write and we had better stay in the house; but it was so uncomfortably hot that I would not agree; so we all sat out on the doosteps again, and when the grandmother came, Nora was told to bring out a chair for her. The chair, I remember, stood so that she could look down the street, toward the north, while I

kept my face turned southward—I did not want to see anything coming.

But I had to; in the midst of a conversation, unflagging as it was strained, I was forced to turn my head and look down the street northward, and with a startled cry I hid my eyes a moment in mother's lap. Only a moment though, for the figure, which seemed to rise out of the little dreary corner where the balcony had been, when I first saw it, had not yet reached the gate when I looked again, and while my eyes were uncontrollably drawn upon it, the old woman's eyes were just as steadily fixed on mine.

It was the same figure; the head with the glazed cap was just above the tall paling fence; the face I could not see; but brown curls clustered about the head, and the dress consisted of a loose, black coat, and pantaloons of a light gray color.

Like one frenzied, I shook mother's knees. "Don't you see it?" I asked again and again, taking no heed of her replies or her attempts to quiet me. "There—there! Now it is gone—just as it went last night."

Both mother and Mrs. MacNamara tried to reason with me, and they got me inside at last; but my screams rang through the house, and Pompey appeared as promptly on the scene as if he had known what was to happen. Not only Pompey came, but the landlady of the boarding house, and she insisted that we should all three come to her house for the night. I clung to her at once, and while Nora and mother were gathering up what was needed for the night, I ran eagerly across the street and was not satisfied till she had landed me in the second story, in a little room clear on the other side of the house.

When mother came, Mrs. MacNamara came with her, and as I declared myself satisfied only if all three remained by my bedside, the landlady listened as intently to Meg Merrilies' half-whispered story as did mother, who thought me fast asleep.

Pompey had gone in search of Mr. Tully, and while waiting for his arrival, she told of the life poor Mrs. St. Denis had passed in that cottage, where, in spite of all her pleading, her husband had established his gambling den, deeming it safer than in any part of the Belvidere. Of the young men who passed in and out of that part of the cottage, Madame had seen but few; but among them was a French Creole from New Orleans, to whom she could speak in her native tongue. Her husband had watched them with an eager eye; and when, soon after the baby's birth, Tom Lavigne was missing, only those who were most intimately acquainted with affairs at the Belvidere, had any suspicion of foul play. The young man visited the city only periodically, being clerk on a large Mississippi river steamer; and often the gay cavaliers who had played cards all the way from New Orleans up to St. Louis, would come to this place to finish the game.

When his brother officers of the "Grand Turk" failed in their search for him, they were convinced that he had missed his footing on the gang plank some dark night and had found his grave in the water. It was long before the time when railroads were running, and it was nothing unusual for steamboats to lie at the St. Louis levee for two or three miles up and down the river, not in one line only, but two or three of them, anchored to each other, reaching far out into the stream, and any corpse might float undiscovered, for a number of weeks.

Nora's mother, on her deathbed, had begged her mother to see that no one occupied the house. From what she had learned through the ravings of the unhappy young wife, the woman believed that Tom Lavigne had been decoyed into the parlor one night after the others had left, had been struck down from behind and the body hidden away in some corner near the house. She insisted, indeed, that it was buried under the balcony, which St. Denis had pulled down under the flimsy excuse that some one might watch at the French window and discover the secret of the gaming table. Her delectable son-in-law, Johnson, had no doubt been given ample means to clear out, Mrs. McNamara thought; for he went away before the St. Denises did. Neither she nor Pompey had ever believed that Edward St. Denis intended to come back to this place; and she went so far as to say that she believed the villain had murdered his own wife long before this.

I dropped off to sleep at last, and slept soundly till morning. There was already a carriage at the door to carry us to the house of a friend living at the other end of town. Early as we were, the guardians of the public peace and safety were still earlier; and no matter how closely mother tried to watch me, I learned before I entered the carriage that they had found the body of the murdered man. They had torn away the flooring of the bedroom where the little child had died, and they found the body where the ragged snowball bush and the sickly ivy were growing above poor Tom Lavinge, and they found the glazed cap in that unhallowed grave with him.

ON THE STROKE OF XII

My belief that coming events cast their shadows before. I have inherited from my mother, though she was neither superstitious nor did she believe in ghosts—as I do. The episode I am about to write of here, she has related to me more than once, adding always—

"To me there has been something gruesome in the midnight hour—just on the strike of twelve—ever since that time."

And strange to say, mother, too, breathed her last just on the stroke of twelve.

My grandfather, Colonel and Commandant of the old Fortress at Ziegenhain, in Hesse, was not at all an aged man when he died, my mother, his oldest child, being only just in her teens. Father and daughter were devotedly attached to each other, and when, in the winter of 1817, a complication of heart and lung trouble grew upon him, he used to say to his daughter, Lottchen—

"Only have a little patience, child, when springtime comes I shall get a long furlough and we will travel—travel clear into Switzerland and Italy."

His daughter, Lottchen—my mother—in the meantime sat patiently in his room with him, reading to him or writing for him, after he had received and dismissed his Adjutant in the morning, offering her strong young arm for his support when he grew restless and desired to walk through the long galleries of the ancient pile of rocks he lived in. For he was only confined to his armchair, as yet, and that only periodically, and his body

servant attired him, each morning, in the full uniform of his military rank as scrupulously and carefully as though the Herr Oberst meant to go straightway to the Exercir-Platz. To be sure, Elard, a younger son, had been sent home from the Cadet School at Hesse-Cassel, but this was more as a mark of attention to his father than that he was really thought to be seriously ill.

My mother, as I say, sat with her father through the day, and after he had retired for the night his arm chair was moved up to his bedside, and mother sat in it and read or dozed till midnight. Shortly after twelve his faithful valet and the old house mam'selle came and shared the watch between them till morning. In the servants' room, in the souterrain, an orderly was constantly in attendance.

The fortress, whatever its strength may have been, was of great age and renown, and the residence assigned to my grandfather had in olden times been a monastery, the church lying only a little distance from it—just across the graveyard, in fact, upon which opened the windows of grandfather's sitting room. Though an austere man and a strict disciplinarian, he was greatly beloved by his brother officers, and the next in command, together with the Adjutant, relieved him of all regimental duties. Mother said that the doctor was always the most jovial of the comrades who tried to while away the tedious hours for her father, though he must have known that his Colonel would never leave these walls except with the black pall over him.

The winter was an unusually severe one, and heavy snow had fallen long before Christmas, covering the earth with a cold white sheet. One night, after her

father had retired to his bed, and mother was sitting in the big arm chair by him, she saw with alarm the hectic flush on his cheeks—deeper and more sharply defined than ever before. But he seemed so much more cheerful that they made the most minute plans for their proposed journey in the spring. His breath came so easily tonight, he said; he felt he was getting better—he was almost well. The doctor had told him, only three days ago, that he would soon improve now, and here he was, ready to travel, if only the snow would melt.

Then his thoughts traveled back to the past, and he grew quite humorous. Did his daughter remember when a little mouse of three she had escaped the vigilance of the nurse and had climbed up into the hall window of the old house at Braunschweig to watch for her father's coming? That was during the time that Napoleon owned the earth, and the Colonel had been Platz-Commandant there under Jerome's rule, and he had returned from parade one day, and had found his little daughter with her feet dangling out of the second-story window shouting to her papa in high glee. And could she remember how papa had said:

"Sit quite still, mousey, I am coming up there, and we'll have a little game together"; and did she remember what the little game was, in which her mamma's slipper played a part?

They laughed so heartily at the recollection, mother said, that her father got to coughing, and when he leaned back in his pillows exhausted, they were startled by the firing of a number of shots, right under the window, it seemed to both. Shots—fired within the precincts of the fortifications—in time of peace—near midnight—what

did it mean? Mother sprang to the window, drew back the curtain and looked out. Only the broad expanse of snow on the graveyard was to be seen in the bright moonlight; only the shadow of a cross here and there, or the branches of a foliage-stripped tree breaking the even surface. But no living thing could be seen, no smoke of powder, or gun barrel gleaming in the moon's rays, which penetrated even the dark nooks and niches in the wall of the old monastery church.

"Ring for the orderly," said her father, which she did, and she took the little handbell, too, and stepped into the corridor to awaken her brother in the next room—a tap on the wall in this building would hardly have sufficed to awaken any sleeper.

The orderly came, touched his cap, and stood stiff and upright before his commander, but his features showed no sign of excitement or alarm.

"Brockmann," said the Colonel, "what firing was that—a perfect volley, it seems to me?"

"Firing! Volley!" Brockmann's mouth stood open. How could he dare to intimate that the Herr Oberst was mistaken?

"Did you hear it, Brockmann?"

"Zu Befehl—nein, Herr Oberst."

By this time Elard had come, in dressing gown and slippers, yawning and rubbing his eyes. He asked:

"Shots? A volley? No."

Brockmann was ordered to reconnoiter, while Elard watched from the window searching the graveyard. But he reported that he found the snow undisturbed on every side of the house, and neither footprints nor bullet marks

anywhere. So further investigation was postponed till morning. Brockmann went back to the servants' hall, Elard to his bed. But the conversation between mother and her father was not resumed; he lay back in his pillows, the flush still deeper on his cheeks.

Suddenly another volley of shots startled them both. Her father raised up his head.

"Ring the bell," he commanded, sharply, "and look out of the window—quick!"

The same silence and immutability lay upon the graveyard, and when Brockmann made his appearance there was a look of terror in his eyes.

"Brockmann, I advise you to look carefully after the trespassers this time," said his commander, "tomorrow must clear up the mystery of this shooting."

The orderly well understood the implied threat, and when he returned he was deathly pale.

"Have you discovered anything?" he was asked sternly, and his answer was:

"Zu Befehl—nein, Herr Oberst"—touching his cap.

"Do you mean to say that you did not hear the shooting which the gnadige Fraulein and I both heard?"

And again his hand went up to his cap as he answered:

"Zu Befehl—I did not, Herr Oberst."

He was told to retire, but be on the alert and answer the bell at once if summoned, and father and daughter again took up their watch. For it was a watch now, and they did not have long to wait till a third volley rang out, and before the sound had died away, the booming of the big bell on the church tower, as it began to toll mid-

night, seemed to make the still air on the graveyard vibrate and tremble. But no living thing could mother's eye discover in the one moment that she peered out; the next moment she was recalled to her father's bedside by a low moan, and when she sprang to his aid she felt that she was too late. His face was ghastly, blood was oozing out from between his colorless lips, and there were stains of blood on the counterpane and pillow. Throwing up his arms wildly above his head, he sank back, while mother flew to the door, dropping the little handbell she meant to ring, till she could hear it roll, tinkle tinkle, from one stone step of the staircase to the next, and then she beat frantically with both hands on her brother's bedroom door, while the long, ghostly galleries of the old monastery echoed with her cries for help. But there is no help for the dead.

For eight days the body of her father lay in state at the Commandantur. His older son, Reinier (he was the Minister of War in this little land of Hesse in after years), came, too, from the Cadet School, and brothers-in-arms came from near and far to pay the last sad honors to their dead comrade. At last the day of the funeral dawned. The ladies of the garrison were assembled at the house of mourning, and they gathered closely around the daughter of the dead chief when the heart-breaking cadences of the funeral march came borne on the clear, frosty air, and the cortege approached with all the pomp and circumstance of military burial.

Flags furled and wrapped with crape; long lines of soldiers marching in measured tread with arms reversed, and officers with badge of deepest mourning on their dress; the funeral car drawn by four black horses, and

close upon it the dead commander's favorite charger, hung with sable trappings, and the saddle empty; then more soldiers—an endless column, and the muffled beat of crape-wound drums, when the notes of the mourning march were hushed.

Through blinding tears she scanned the God's-acre now, in broad daylight, from the window, and, surrounded by loving, sympathizing friends, mother said she had almost forgotten the strange occurrence of a week ago. Among the officers who had come from other garrisons, was a cousin of her father's, whom she had always called uncle, a kind-hearted old gentleman, whom she knew to be her guardian. Before the coffin had been removed from the hearse to the grave, he had come in to join the ladies, and he stepped to the window, with his arm around his ward, while they lowered the remains of her father into the ground. Through the closed sash she could not hear what was spoken outside, but in the midst of her sobs the rattle of musketry fell upon her ear —the volley fired over her father's grave. Another volley came, and still another, and she knew then that she had heard a week ago, the salute fired over her dead father's grave, while he was still with her, and which he, too, had heard, not heeding that it came as a warning from an unknown Beyond.

WHERE THEY FOUND HER

Westphalia, like Scotland, boasts of men who possess the gift of second sight; though Levin Schucking, in his book, Das Romantische Westphalen, says that these men are dying out, and the power to foresee is growing very rare in old Westphalia.

It is not a source of pleasure to the men themselves, this strange gift to foretell the death and burial of their fellowmen, and they would willingly dispense with it if they might. In my earliest youth I saw one of these Spokenkeiker or Geisterscher, and I remember him very well. A tall, ungainly man, was old Nolte; with grayish hair, a kind expression on his face, with light blue, melancholy eyes, that stood out of his head with terror, people said, when he had one of his visions, called Vorgesicht.

He was a baker by trade, and his apprentices said that they had seen him, in the middle of the night, leave the kneading trough without a moment's warning, and with glazed eyes walk through the house to the street, and there with straining eyes peer through the darkness, moaning and wringing his hands as if in deepest grief. Presently he would begin to count: "One, two, three," —sometimes up to ten, and more.

It was then that he counted the number of mourners who followed the dead; and he knew who they were, too; but he never could be made to tell. He would tell the sexton, who was also grave digger, to prepare a grave, either for a child or a grown person, as the case might be; he would tell the color of the horses that drew the

wagon with the coffin; but if he knew, he never told who was inside the dread casket.

I must explain that Petershagen, only a small village itself, contained the parish church and graveyard; and the country people of the other villages, Eldagsen, Dotenhausen and Maaslingen, had to bring their dead here to bury them. As there were no hearses in the rural districts, the coffin was loaded on to an open wagon, and the mourners walked behind it on foot; and as there were not many streets in Petershagen, the road to the church and graveyard ran directly past old Nolte's house.

The ancient castle at Petershagen, on the Weser, partly renovated in the beginning of this century, had been assigned as residence to my father, after he had quitted the army at the close of the Napoleonic wars. He had entered civil service in Prussia, and as surveyor and civil engineer, was engaged in retransferring into German measurement the land which during Napoleon's occupancy had been divided and cut up as best suited the French. It was a labor of many years, and father had a large staff of field help and office clerks, skilled geometricians and chainbearers; and a part of the old building was used for offices and bureaux, by them.

It was in the nature of my father's occupation that he should be guest today at castle or manor house of the proudest baron in the land, while the next day would find him at the Hof or some Bauer, no less proud of his estate and descent than the nobleman on his Edelsitz. For these men, though we call them peasants, slightingly, and who wear the dress of the peasant.—of finest cloth, with buttons of silver, to be sure,—are as proud and prouder than titled nobility; and their estates, or Bauer-

hofe, are often in better condition and of greater money value than those of their more aristocratic neighbors.

For myself, I have very pleasant recollections of the Bauerhof at Eldagsen, where I spent one whole happy day in my earliest childhood. It happened one morning that father, rumbling along in our old caleche, overtook Yette, the nurse maid, with his two youngest in charge, and I, the oldest of the two, set up a howl to be taken along to Eldagsen. Of course the Bauer and his sister paid me every possible attention, and I was fed and petted all day long. The sister had a face like an apple-blossom, pink and white, and her name was Louise—which is abbreviated to Wieschen, in Low-German dialect, and pronounced Veeshen,—and the last thing I could remember that night was that as Veeshen laid me, fast asleep, into the old caleche, her long, flaxen braids swept my face as she stooped over me.

Perhaps the only living soul in the whole country who had no faith in old Nolte and his weird power, was a young man on father's staff, a skilled geometrician, who laughed at everything he did not understand. He was with father almost constantly, though he did not belong to Westphalia. He came from the Rhein, and held lighter views of life than the dull, though honest people on the Weser. He gave more particular offence to the sexton, who swore that in every instance the old baker had been correct in his prophecy.

In the castle grounds, below the terrace, there was an avenue defendu—at least in summer time, when the berries were ripe. It was a long walk, bordered by hedges of gooseberries, currants and raspberries, and the female servants of the family knew well enough that while they

kept my mouth and that of my little sister filled with berries, my mother would never discover that it was here they came for their gossiping. They met here one afternoon, Wilmina, Marie and Yette; and the subject they were discussing must have been of absorbing interest, for they forgot that little pitchers have long ears.

Busy as I was with the Danish gooseberries, I heard the name of my dear friend, Wieschen, mentioned; but it puzzled me what they meant when they added, "She had written that if he did not keep his promise, they would have to hunt for her some day where the water was deepest."

I wondered what Wieschen could have been promised. She had shown me her new cap with gold lace on it; her amber beads, and her garnet cross. What more could she want? At the Wulbrand's Hof nobody ever lacked for anything, I had heard; so what did Wieschen mean by hiding herself in order to get what she wanted? And in the water, too. Before I could ask my questions old Roemer, the gardener with the wooden leg, made his appearance at the end of the walk, and the girls ran, dragging us with them.

The berry season was over, summer had passed, and autumn had come into the land; and then, one day, the rumor went that old Nolte had had a Vorgesicht. When it reached the ears of Mohrhaus, the geometer, his black eyes danced with mischief, and he called on the sexton.

"I have had warning to prepare a grave—for a grown person," the sexton said solemnly.

"From the Herr Pastor, or your crazy Spokenkieker?" asked Mohrhaus.

"From Nolte. Come with me, so that you may be con-

vinced at last. He does not like to speak these things to strangers; but he will speak if I ask him to tell you."

If Nolte's eyes had encountered the sight of a ghost instead of the gay face of the young geometrician, he could not have started back in greater horror. But Mohrhaus only sneered.

"I want to hear about your funeral procession," he laughed. "When will it arrive?"

"In three days from now," was the positive reply. "But there will be no procession," the old man added sadly, "not a single mourner will follow the coffin."

"Oh-oh!" laughed the young man again, "that means, I suppose, that unless you really find some one to bury within that time, you will simply put a straw man into the coffin."

"Tell him what the horses are like that will bring the coffin on the wagon," the sexton suggested to the old baker.

"Yes, tell me what kind of horses will bring your dead man," added the youth; "what are they like?"

"Ein Falber und ein Rappe," (a dun horse and black one), was the impressive answer.

But Mohrhaus laughed the louder.

"Ein Falber und ein Rappe!" he repeated. "Upon my word now—that is the team the old German kings drove in their chariots. Your dead man comes in majesty!"

The Geisterseher's patience was exhausted.

"Death always comes in majesty!" he cried in a ringing voice. "And you, too, shall tremble before it ere three suns have set!"

As Mohrhaus was to go on a surveying trip next day, he made sure first, through the agency of the parish clerk, that there was no one sick, or in immediate danger of dying of old age, in the parish; and he received from him the promise, that if word should be sent to dig a grave, he would go himself and see that no such horses as the Spokenkieker had described should draw the wagon.

On his return to Petershagen, the third day, he was met with the informtaion that a funeral had been announced to arrive from Eldagsen that day, but had not yet come, though it was then late in the afternoon.

"Going to keep up old Nolte's reputation at all risks," Mohrhaus said, and he started for the tavern, where he expected to find the sexton.

The sun was fast approaching the west, and a rough wind blew through the deserted streets; it seemed to Mohrhaus that he heard the clatter of hoofs on the cobblestones, as he came along, but he paid no attention to it.

The tavern keeper informed him that the sexton had just been summoned away, as the long-delayed funeral had come at last.

Mohrhaus' eyes twinkled, as he said: "Then I must go to the graveyard at once, before they put the straw man under ground."

The sun was about to go down when he reached the gate of the cemetery; he met the parish clerk, who told him that the funeral had come—a lonely-looking coffin on an open wagon drawn by two horses—a dun horse and a black one. The wagon that left Eldagsen had been drawn by a span of white horses; but they had become

unmanageable, had torn the harness, broken the wagon, and thrown the coffin to the ground. The man who drove the wagon, and the man who followed, as solitary mourner, had both been hurt; one of the white horses had to be shot, the other had run away, and the old team now in the wagon, had been picked up among the people on the road.

"A likely story," said Mohrhaus, and he pressed on to where he saw a number of men gathered around an open grave, his friend, the sexton, among them.

They had evidently removed the lid from the coffin, or perhaps it had been broken by the fall. They all seemed perturbed as the young man approached, and the sexton seemed anxious to put the lid back.

"Are you trying to hide your straw man from me, sexton?" he asked with his ready sneer; and the sexton lifted the lid away, with a sudden impulse, so that Mohrhaus might see.

The last departing rays of the sun lay on the coffin; and as Mohrhaus stooped down, there was a glint as of gold, where the light fell on heavy flax-blond braids. For it was Wieschen he saw in the coffin, and they had found her where the water was deepest, in the little lake on the Wulbrand's Hof.

WHAT THE WHITE LADY TOLD ME

Every self-respecting old castle in the Fatherland has its own ghost. In one it is the semblance of an infant, lying at midnight, feebly wailing, on the broad flagstone at the foot of the winding stairs in the tower, or on the cold slab in front of the great entrance door to the gloomy hall. In another it is the shriveled-up figure of a little old man who comes and shakes his head, portentiously whenever he finds conviviality and good cheer where he intends to herald death or disaster; and again it is the shadowy form of a female, trailing long dusky robes behind her and wringing her hands as if in grief or despair.

Other castles boast of skeletons dragging clanking chains after them; but the really nice people disavow ghosts of this kind, as too coarse and noisy. In the castle of Petershagen it was the White Lady, so-called because she wandered around in her grave-clothes, the white linen shroud still bound around her head, and her hands crossed on her bosom, as they had been in the coffin.

Every nurse maid in the country knew the story of the White Lady, and our Yette, being at the fountain-head, as it were, was supposed to know more particulars than any of the others. That it was told to the young ones in their charge as soon as they were supposed to be old enough to get a good "creep" to their skin, and a good raise to their hair, goes without saying; though every individual nurse was naturally warned not to frighten the children with ghost stories.

The story as Yette told it, and, as it obtains to this day, for aught I know, was that a few centuries before we came into the world, the lord who then held sway at the Burg, discovered one day that his lawful wedded wife was becoming wrinkled in the face, and that her lady companion was much more youthful and pleasing in looks. The foundation of the old castle laid close to the banks of the Weser, so that its walls are washed by the river, and in spring time, when the waters grow turbulent in the narrow bed, the waves sometimes dash against the mighty pile as if trying to sweep it from the face of the earth.

The walls are eleven feet in thickness on this side, so that the window sills are used for cozy chatting corners, and the castle-lord, opening the casement wide, one day, for his lawful lady to get a look at the mad waters below, grew fearful lest she might become dizzy so near to the edge of the sill, stretched out his hand suddenly and—set up a frantic yell that his dearly beloved wife had fallen into the water. But the members of the household loved this good lady, and some of the warriors bold rushed out with staves and poles, and in their little skiffs battled with the wild waves till they found the dead lady with her clothes caught in some brush along the river's bank.

And then came retribution to the wicked knight. It availed him not that he married his old wife's young companion, and there were scenes of revelry in the great banquet hall of the castle night after night; the ghost of his first wife, dressed simply, but I fear not becomingly, in her grave-clothes, and with her hands folded meekly across her breast, was always there, interrupt-

ing tete-a-tetes between her false lord and her successor, or gliding out among the guests assembled for carousal. Flesh and blood could not survive the encroachments of such flesh-and-bloodless, unbidden guest for any length of time, but when the wicked lord and his new wife were both dead, this reprehensible habit of rambling through halls and corridors had so grown upon the White Lady that she continued to walk, thereby frightening silly nurse maids and nervous children out of their seven senses.

I am very sure Yette had been warned by my mother most emphatically not to frighten us two little ones with ghosts in general, and the White Lady in particular; and I had become hysterical and frenzied with fear before she would consent to lead me, sobbing as if my heart would break, to the door of mother's bedroom one night, shortly after 12 o'clock. In answer to Yette's knock came mother's inquiry what was wanted, but Yette had scarcely begun to explain that the child was unmanageable "because the White Lady had told her," when the door opened and mother said severely:

"Yette, I have told you for the last time now, never to talk such silly trash to the children."

"Gnadige Frau may believe me, I never did," protested Yette with all the vehemence of a bad conscience.

"Let the poor devil come in," father's sleepy voice came from the depths of the great "Himmelbett," and then, trembling with cold and excitement, I slipped by mother and clambered up into the big, broad Turkish divan in the corner of the room. Nothing remained to do for mother but make a bed for me with pillow and coverlet; and moving a screen up to shield me from the

light that always burned in her room, she left me to my own reflections.

To my dying day I shall remember the feeling of safety and comfort I enjoyed; the room was large and high, the walls covered with hangings of some dark red shade, with golden markings running through the flower-pattern; the canopy over the bed was of the same dark color, which was repeated once more in the window curtains. The door through which I had come in was invisible, as the heavy wall hangings covered it too; the door opening into the corridor, however, was large and of dark wood, as were the frames of the windows, which gave out on the upper terrace.

The walls on this side were not over five feet through, and on the outside were covered with ivy; and this ivy had spread its mantle over the stone saint that stood in a niche near the broad steps leading up from the lower terrace.

It was very pleasant in my corner here, with light enough to distinguish every object not shut out by the screen, and my tears had long since dried. But my little heart was heavy within my breast. Grown-up people sometimes do not understand children; and children have no way of making their elders understand their fears and apprehensions. For weeks there had been a certain something in the air, of which I stood in vague fear. Half-words mysteriously uttered, a conversation broken off at my approach, a sigh from mother, sometimes a tear wiped hastily from her eyes—all these things I saw and "took into me," but I could shape no questioning why or wherefore.

Father, it seems, did not go to sleep again this night,

for I heard him talking to mother. Only fragments of the talk reached me. "A climate like that of Italy," I heard him say once; "A domain half as big as the whole Kingdom of Prussia," again; "An assured future for the boys." Then there was something said about tyranny and injustice, and merit not appreciated. And then, I suppose, I dropped off to sleep.

Never was there greater surprise "in our circles" than at the announcement, sometime after this, that we were on the eve of departure for America.

Boys, I presume, are the same all the world over, and the three belonging to us felt their importance now as never before. For my smaller sister and myself there was much extra petting and caressing before we were finally deposited on board the big three-master "Leontine." I think the ocean must have swelled with the tears that were shed by us and over us at our departure; but father and the rascally boys never once cried.

It was in the very beginning of the tide of emigration from Germany, and a family like ours attracted some attention at New Orleans, which may have been owing, come to think of it, to the fact that my sister and I could swallow bigger oysters, and more of them, than any man of twice our size.

The steamer Hannibal carried not only us, but a number of other German emigrants, up the Mississippi river. (My mother called the others "Auswanderer," as if we had not been emigrants, too.) We were in the cabin, the other auswanderers were on the deck. Father, speaking English fluently, and being naturally looked up to by the crowd, was always in demand to straighten out some misunderstanding or unravel some tangled skein of lin-

guistic difficulty. Mother, who would carefully have wiped her fingers had she ever by any accident touched one of the blue linen "kittels" which the men wore, rather resented this sending of messages for father at all hours; but father only said, in his good-natured way, "Oh, let me help the poor devils."

One day there was a great commotion, and such a babel of confusion as can be produced by only the German speech when conducted by fifty individuals at once, each trying to out-talk the others. We were all out on the gallery in less than no time, and soon saw father in the midst of his countrymen. Close beside us another steamer, not so grand as ours, seemed to give us escort, and both were on the point of landing. Then we understood that Captain Frazer proposed to transfer the emigrants and some other baggage to this smaller steamer, as he said there was not water enough in the channel, just below Memphis, to make it safe for a boat too heavily laden. Of course the amiable emigrants kicked, though the Captain promised to take them on again later. But father had gotten his Dutch up, in defense of his countrymen, and the Captain could not shift his load.

One thing I remember quite distinctly, the whole rabble having caught just a little English by this time, stood in the stern of the boat, thumb to nose, with fingers wagging, and shouting, "Plenty vahter, plenty vahter!" as the smaller boat fell behind and we moved on.

That night, after supper, when the cabin was warm and brilliant with lights, and some lady at the piano was droning "Suwanee River," Captain Frazer made his way up to father and courteously asked him to step out on the guards. Of course, everybody in the saloon fol-

lowed, and I remember how weird was the change from the bright inside to the dreary without. But once fairly outside I stood frozen with horror; I stared my eyes out —for I had seen it all before. The broad, dark, swirling river, a fitful moon-beam serving to make darkness visible, a steamboat-wreck, with its smokestacks and just one corner of its upper deck, its light-painted "Texas," with the pilot wheel inside, lying almost within touch of my hand, it seemed to me. A little farther off, nearer in to the shore, was another wreck, not yet sunk quite so deep; and the water that sluggishly washed over it, every now and again struck something that in turn moved the clapper of the big bell, causing a mournful, muffled sound, tolling a dirge for the seven fair ships that had here found a grave.

What the Captain said I did not then understand, but I had seen this once before, and I was frantically tugging at mother's skirt, stamping my feet in a rage of fear, and trying to hide my eyes in the folds of her dress.

"The White Lady told me," I screamed, "the White Lady told me," and the other ladies, who came sympathetically forward and to mother's aid, could not have understood my fright even if they had understood German.

This "steamboat's graveyard," as it was called, was what the Captain had dreaded, and he wanted father to understand why he had meant to transfer his interesting proteges from his own to another vessel for a short space of time.

Whether the recollection of this piece of German obstinacy had anything to do with a little adventure a day or two later I don't know, but I rather think so. In those

dark ages of river travel, when a steamer had once established its reputation, there was no necessity for constant racing to keep its fame, so we meandered upward to St. Louis at quite a comfortable gait. To watch them "wood up" was one of the ever-recurring excitements of the journey, and father and the boys always went on shore, father naturally taking up with the little picnaninnies hanging 'round the wood-pile. On this occasion quite a number of the dear emigrants had gone ashore, too; and when the bell suddenly clanged out an abrupt warning, only William and George could reach the gangplank. Father, with the younger one, was nearly a quarter of a mile away, but I did not know it. So I laughed fit to kill myself when I saw my beloved countrymen floundering around in the sand on the shore, tumbling over each other, yelling and wildly gesticulating for the boat to stop.

But she swung majestically into the stream, and then for the first time I heard from the big boys that father and Albert had been left on shore. Darkness was setting in, and the boat went slowly but surely, though it kept in close to the bank. I ran to call mother, and she, with the other ladies, came out of the cabin where the lamps had just been lighted. We were now abreast of one of those long, gloomy stretches of native forest-growth, which then lined the banks of the river, and against this background, and lighted up by the fire that the people at the wood yard had built, I saw Albert, a little in advance of father, whom he was holding by the hand and trying to drag along faster. I thought I could read the terror in the boy's face as he saw the black night and the blacker forest before him; but there was greater ter-

ror in my face, and in my heart, too, for I had seen this all before, and again I stamped my feet in an agony of fear, and screamed, as I clung to mother's skirts.

"The White Lady told me—oh! the White Lady told me."

Mother's suspense was relieved at this moment for the boat was stopped and this gave her more time to devote to me. Thoroughly out of patience, and ashamed of my screaming and stamping, she took me by the shoulders, made me face her and said emphatically:

"The White Lady told you nothing; you never saw the White Lady; there is no White Lady." At the end of every sentence she gave me a vigorous little shake, and then sent me directly to bed.

After long years, when it had become the business of this younger brother to pilot boats along the entire length of the Mississippi River, he still spoke of the dread he had felt of being lost in the trackless forest that night.

In St. Louis we did not find a climate like that of Italy; we found many disappointments, I fear, and found that we were in no way better here than the Smiths, Browns and Robinsons. When I grew older I learned how we came to be here at all, which was only because father had gone into the net of a "soul-seller"—Seelenverkaufer, the Germans call them. These people were paid by ship-agents and others so much "per soul" for every man, woman or child whom they could induce to emigrate to North or South America, where they generally fleeced their victims out of the last penny by selling them large tracts of swamp lands or impenetrable forests and jungle for farm lands, acting in concert with confederates on this side of the ocean. These people had

their spies everywhere in Germany, and knew every malcontent in the country. Father, it was well known, had resigned from the army in a fit of pique when a cousin he disliked had been promoted over his head; and in Civil Service he had grown discontented, too, because advancement was not rapid enough; which he ascribed to the tyranny and injustice of the King.

I have always held father excusable for a certain amount of pride, for he belonged to the Hanoverian contingent of Wellington's army, a cadet just emerged from military school, and he was made a lieutenant on the battlefield of Waterloo, for daring and bravery long before "night or Blucher" had come.

The first few months in the country my father devoted entirely to the enjoyment of his liberty—that is: he wandered about the streets and the suburbs of the city with my smaller sister and myself one by each hand. To be sure, he could have enjoyed this same liberty twenty-four hours out of every day under the rule of the "tyrant king" in the old country; but that never seemed to strike him. I fancy he had an idea of founding a little empire of his own, consisting principally of forest, where horses, deer, bears and niggers still ran wild, and where he could tame them so far that they would come up to be petted and eat lump sugar out of his hand.

In the meantime the little German thalers which were to buy the big American farm, were melting like snow before the sun. Father had declined a professorship at West Point, which had been tendered him through the kind offices of Colonel Brant, on the ground that he had come to America to be a free man, and he would never

enter service of any kind again. The thalers flew faster, and two or three pieces of old-fashioned silverware, showing the coat of arms and crest of mother's family, had already found their way into stranger-hands, while the lines of care and sorrow daily deepened in my mother's handsome face.

Still father kept up his aimless roaming through the streets with us two little ones; and so long as we were allowed all the stick candy we could eat, we were always ready to go. One day we were sauntering along the southern end of Second street, a most unattractive neighborhood, for there were mostly pork-packing establishments there, and the conglomeration of houses in which the working people, many of them Germans, lived. Suddenly I gave such a jerk to father's hand that he stood stock still to see what ailed me. My first impulse was to cry out in anguish, "The White Lady told me—oh! the White Lady told me!" But I had learned wisdom in my short generation, and I controlled myself and pointed across the street, to the east side, where there stood, somewhat isolated and amid the most sordid surroundings, one of those ugly two-story buildings called "half-houses," because the roof slants only to one side, and the supposition is that a front will be added at some future day. This thing was built of brick and painted yellow, a perfect abomination of ugliness, and I said to father:

"Is not that a very ugly house?"

He surveyed it critically, to please me, and said good-naturedly, "I think I never saw an uglier one."

With a shudder I said, "I hate it," but I stood fascinated for all that.

I had seen it before, and I had climbed up those steps on the porch, outside, to the second story of the building. But in order to explain how horrible was the sight I met with inside, I must say something about German customs to those not to the manner born. Every family of the better class has—or had, in those times—its own patterns or designs which are woven into their table linen. The table linen which mother brought into the family showed lozenges in one design, stars in the other. From father's family had come the rose-pattern and a leaf-design, both of which were condemned as in bad taste by mother. She maintained that for ordinary table linen only geometrical patterns were admissible; only in the finer damasks were floral or other intricate designs the proper thing. Of this fine damask there were table-cloths with accompanying napkins for a large number of covers, perhaps twenty-four, or forty-eight, with hunting scenes woven in, or floral designs, repeated, in part, in every one of the napkins. Of the commoner kind of table-cloths, with napkins, there were so many that the same piece never saw service more than once in a twelve-month, if so often, and we had brought many a "kiste" full of linen to this country. Among the table linen the lozenge-pattern was most in use.

I repeat, I had climbed those stairs with a beating heart, had opened the door into the first room fronting on the porch, and then my heart stood still. On the bare floor, in a row, lay a number of people who had died of cholera, and nearest the door lay my mother, dead, and the body was wrapped from head to foot in one of the large table-cloths of the lozenge pattern. Her hair, gray as it was in after years, alone protruded from this sin-

gular shroud; but I knew it was mother, though I did not see her face. The sun was blazing in through an uncurtained window; the room was unfurnished and unoccupied save for these dead; in short, the place and the scene was such as was often found a year or two later, when the epidemic broke out in St. Louis, of which no one, save myself, had ever dreamt before.

But the spell was broken; the White Lady had lied to me. It was not many years till father filled one of the ever-open graves dug for idealists and dreamers who die of disappointment and a broken heart. Mother lived to follow the fortunes of some of her children across the Pacific Ocean, and she found in California a climate much more like that of Italy than any she had found on the banks of the Mississippi.

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